

# The African Communist

NO 99 FOURTH QUARTER 1984



**BOTHA-REAGAN  
AXIS  
THREATENS PEACE**



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## **THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST**

*Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party*

**No 99 Fourth Quarter 1984**

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## **EDITORIAL NOTES**

# **WHEN THE TIME WILL COME FOR DIALOGUE**

It is now more than half a year since the signing of the Nkomati Accord and the Lusaka agreement, but peace has not come to Southern Africa. The MNR in Mozambique and Unita in Angola continue with their murderous campaigns, sustained morally and logistically by the Botha regime which continuously presses for their inclusion in their respective governments. At the same time, the activity of the liberation movements headed by the ANC and SWAPO have diminished not one whit, and the masses of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia continue to demonstrate support for their objectives.

It would be wrong to say nothing has changed since the agreements but irrespective of the constraints under which the liberation movements may have been forced to operate, they remain in the vanguard of the fight against apartheid domination and show no sign of having been "hit for six", as claimed by Law and Order Minister le Grange.



Nevertheless, there has been a great deal of discussion since the agreements were signed that the conditions may have been created for the ending of armed struggle by the ANC and SWAPO. Doubtless this is the hope of the Botha regime, which ceaselessly maintains that all resistance to its apartheid policies is artificially stimulated from outside and that, denied bases in the frontline states, the ANC and SWAPO would cease to exist. In this approach the Botha regime has been encouraged by the United States administration, whose Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Chester Crocker has made approaches to both the ANC and SWAPO suggesting that their objectives are capable of immediate realisation if only they would abandon the armed struggle.

In an extensive interview with the London *Guardian* last July, Crocker said that what had been made clear especially by the Nkomati Accord was

“that the illusion that armed struggle will solve South Africa’s problems has been dealt a body blow. It could even be an irreversible body blow. So has the illusion that South Africa faces a total onslaught from its neighbours”.

The man who is labouring under an illusion is Chester Crocker. The Botha regime has never, in fact, maintained that it was facing a total onslaught from its neighbours. The total onslaught with which it has been frightening its supporters was supposed to have been inspired by Moscow, and it was as a bastion of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism that Botha called for the “constructive engagement” of the United States and its other western allies. In this context the Nkomati Accord has achieved nothing. The Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist world have not wavered in their support for the African revolution either in Mozambique or South Africa. If anything, the Nkomati Accord has made them more determined than ever to strengthen the ability of the frontline states to withstand the political, economic and military pressures of the racists and imperialists.

What Crocker was calling for in his interview was a recognition of what he termed a “fact of life”, namely, that the whites in South Africa were strong enough to impose their will not only in South Africa and Namibia but throughout all Southern Africa. In this he is reflecting not merely the will of the Reagan administration but the arrogance of the Botha regime itself which now demands recognition as a “regional power” on the basis of its aggression against the frontline states. Thus Foreign Minister Pik Botha, reporting on his discussions with western European leaders last June, said he had made it clear that South Africa was demanding the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola irrespective of any settlement in Namibia.

"The question of their withdrawal is now not only linked to the peaceful settlement of the Namibian question, but South Africa — as a regional power — demands it". (*The Star*, June 8, 1984.)

A few days later Pik and Premier P.W. Botha met for discussions with Crocker in Rome, where they exchanged views on the Namibian question. Afterwards,

"A senior South African government spokesman in Pretoria has stated that South Africa will insist on a Cuban withdrawal from Angola irrespective of whether or not the withdrawal is linked to the SWA/Namibia independence issue. He said the Cuban presence in the former Portuguese colony constituted a threat to security in the sub-continent and there could be no visible peace in the region while they remained there. He said South Africa is a regional power and it does not want the Cubans in Angola". (BBC Monitoring Report June 15, 1984.)

In taking this stance, the Botha regime is going further than Reagan and Thatcher, who have publicly promoted the notion of "linkage" between Namibian independence and a Cuban withdrawal from Angola. South Africa, as a "regional power" in its own right, now demands a Cuban withdrawal because the Cuban presence constitutes a "threat to security in the sub-continent". Yet it is South Africa which has been guilty of aggression against every frontline state, while not a single Cuban soldier has crossed the Angolan border in any direction. What the two Bothas really mean is that the presence of Cuban troops in Angola is an effective deterrent to outright South African attempts to occupy Angola and install a pro-Western Savimbi regime.

### **The Real Danger**

What recent events, including the Nkomati and Lusaka agreements, have made clear is that it is not the Cubans, not Mozambique and Angola, not the ANC and SWAPO which threaten security in Southern Africa but the apartheid regime, whose denial of rights to the majority of South Africans is the root cause of all the instability and violence which has beset the region. When Crocker calls on the ANC to abandon armed struggle, he is calling on the majority of the people of South Africa to accept white domination as a fact of life. He said in his *Guardian* interview:

"You cannot get government changes in the right direction unless you have a white majority for change and a power base".

It is shortsighted and stupid of Crocker to think that the Nkomati Accord has deprived the ANC of its power base. The power base of the ANC is the mass of the oppressed people of South Africa, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population and whose determination to achieve national liberation is being demonstrated on every front today.



Crocker is also wrong in thinking or suggesting that progressive social change in South Africa will only come about through the goodwill of the white minority regime. Our history has shown that whatever advances have been made in South Africa have flown from the struggle of the people to improve their conditions. Nothing has been given away by the ruling class. Every gain had to be fought for and won with blood, sweat, toil and tears.

The dissarray in the ranks of the white supremacists today is the consequence of decades of struggle by the oppressed people under the leadership of the various organs of the liberation movement. The disintegration of the United Party began with the Defiance Campaign of 1952 which resulted in the formation of the Liberal Party, followed by the break-away of the Progressive Party in the wake of the mass upsurge of the late 1950s. Then came the opening of the era of armed struggle in the 1960s, the workers' strikes of the 1970s, the Soweto revolt of 1976, the continuing international campaign of boycott and sanctions — a combination of pressures which eventually shook the foundations of the ruling Nationalist Party itself, leading to the split between *verligtes* and *verkramptes* which is still tearing the party to pieces as it tries to "adapt or die".

Botha, Reagan, Crocker and Co. are desperate to bring the armed struggle to an end because they realise that the longer it continues, the more the forces of revolution will become radicalised and consolidated. They fear this not only in Southern Africa but worldwide. They fear the development of

"a great army of Socialists, marching irresistibly on and growing daily in number, organisation, discipline, insight and assurance of victory". (Engels, *Class Struggles in France*.)

They offer concessions, reforms, bribes. They threaten and use force against the frontline states in a bid to get them to reject the ANC.

However, it is becoming obvious to the racists and imperialists that they have failed in their attempts to isolate and destroy the ANC, which steadily grows in strength both nationally and internationally. For Crocker, however, the ANC is only "one of a number of internal black African Nationalist voices. It's not for the United States to say what the role of the ANC is. We don't dismiss it, nor do we endorse it". Yet he and his racist friends in the apartheid regime would like to change it. They would like to separate the ANC from its natural allies, the independent African countries and the socialist countries. They would like the ANC to separate itself from its ally, the South African Communist Party. And they would like the ANC to abandon armed struggle. Then, it has been hinted by both Pik Botha and Crocker in recent talks, it might be possible to arrange a "dialogue" between

the ANC and the apartheid regime. Some sections of the Afrikaner Nationalist press have even hinted that the ANC could be legalised.

And where would that leave the ANC? It would take us back to Sharpeville, with the regime totally ignoring the views of the oppressed majority and the people defenceless in the face of police terror. ANC President Tambo had no hesitation in rejecting this scenario. He said, on the eve of a tour of western European capitals last July:

"Our conception of an effective struggle is a combination of political and armed struggle. We cannot rely solely on the gun, but it would be disastrous if we abandoned it. Non-violence has brought about more, not less apartheid".

President Tambo said the ANC would only consider entering into a dialogue with the regime if there was some guarantee that the aim was to dismantle apartheid. The release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners, he said, would be an essential precondition so that they could take part in discussions.

The arrogant behaviour of the apartheid regime and its imperialist allies make it clear that the abandonment of armed struggle at this stage would be tantamount to unconditional surrender. This is obviously what Crocker has in mind. He says: "There are avenues for people to express themselves, to organise in the labour field and many other different sectors", as though the South African people enjoyed full democratic rights and nobody ever ran the risk of being killed or detained without trial by the police.

Such avenues as there are in South Africa have been kept open by the people in the face of the harshest repression on the part of the regime. Crocker and the Bothas may rest assured that these avenues will be explored and extended and that the people's struggle, on all fronts, will be raised to the level that is necessary to ensure that dialogue, when it comes, will be fruitful.

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## **S.A. ECONOMY IN CRISIS**

On a fundamental analysis, the South African economy has been in crisis for a considerable time. The causes of this crisis lie in the contradictions inherent in the capitalist system, exacerbated by the contradictions inherent in the policies of apartheid. Our journal has more than once discussed the causes. The South African ruling class, however, succeeded for some years in staving off the worst effects of the crisis. The price of gold was the key factor in this

success. As a reaction to the thirty years' effort by the US government to freeze the gold price, it soared around 1980 to a level which has proved to be unsustainable. Now South Africa's chickens are coming home to roost on the economic front as well as elsewhere.

By May 1984, unprecedentedly gloomy statements were already coming out of South African ruling circles. In that month, the Governor of the S.A. Reserve Bank said that "the economic upswing had lost its momentum and the economy faced a difficult period as it adjusted to the lower gold price and the effects of the drought."

About the same time, Volkskas reported on the situation of South African agriculture.

"Net farming income declined from 48.6% of gross income in 1975 to 16.6% in 1983 ... Farmers' debts amount to about R6.4 bn ... at present more short term loans are granted, which is symptomatic of the cash flow problems experienced by farmers."

As the year went on, these problems became worse. By the end of July, the gold price was down to \$330, from around the \$400 level at the beginning of the year. The cries of agony became shriller. "Seldom since the end of World War II has the South African economy been in such dire straits," declared *The Citizen* in June. The Department of Agriculture reported farming income down by 42% from 1982 to 1983 and its current level the lowest for at least ten years. Company liquidations were up by 31% from the first quarter of 1983 to the first quarter of 1984.

In its June *Quarterly Bulletin* the South African Reserve Bank tried to find some comfort by alleging that "South Africa's slowdown in economic growth in the first quarter of this year was neither expected nor unwelcome as it largely represented a reaction to policy actions to slow down the growth in aggregate demand." There may well be some truth in this; the deliberate engineering of depression in order to drive down wage levels is part of the economic technique of every capitalist government. Nevertheless, the Reserve Bank's apologia failed to still the growing disquiet among the South African bourgeoisie. By early July, a banker interviewed by the *Rand Daily Mail* was describing the fall in the value of the South African currency as "near disaster". At the end of July the bank lending rate was raised to a record 25%. Perhaps the most eloquent summary of the situation came in an unusually frank editorial published in the *Sunday Express* of June 24:

"Hardly a day passes without fresh evidence that South Africa is passing into a period of economic stringency and hardship. Suffering, as usual, is unequal. Those who have money to lend — the corporations are saving five times as much as individual South Africans — are making a killing by lending at unprecedented interest rates. The long-suffering poor, whether they are blacks in shanty-towns or



white pensioners in inner-city slums, are sometimes starving, sometimes close to it. Homeowners buckle under the cost of bonds which they signed at much lower interest rates ... The only way to stabilise the currency is to reduce spending."

Just a week later, in answer to a Parliamentary question, the new Minister of Finance, Barend du Plessis, refused to undertake that the "accords" with neighbouring states would lead to any decrease in military expenditure. This was hardly unexpected. As usual, the burden of any reductions in government spending are likely to fall squarely on education, on social services, on wages, on the poor.

The economic dynamism of the sixties and early seventies played a crucial role in enabling the regime to survive as long as it has. In those years there was a steady increase in gross national product, out of which a military machine could be built, hefty bribes could be paid to wide sections of the white population, lesser bribes could be paid to black collaborators and even sections of the black proletariat could occasionally be given a few crumbs to appease their anger. All that has become steadily less possible over the last few years. The present situation daily brings home to the people the truth of the slogan that they have nothing to lose but their chains. At the same time, the confidence of the landowners and the bourgeoisie is draining away. Financial stringency reduces the freedom of manoeuvre of the government. Dwindling profits disappoint the foreign backers of apartheid.

This is one of the fundamental reasons why the regime is now on the defensive. Its system offers no way out of the difficulty. Economic problems will continue to mount and as they do so, the foundations of apartheid will continue to crumble.

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## **SACP PROPAGANDA SPREADS**

Not all the machinations of the security police have been able to prevent the circulation of propaganda material prepared and issued by the underground cadres of the South African Communist Party. In recent months pamphlets and stickers carrying the message of the Communist Party have made their appearance on the streets of towns and cities throughout the country.

A sticker issued for May Day read: "Workers! Organise! Unite! Fight! For People's Power and a Socialist South Africa — Call from the S.A.C.P." Superimposed on the black text is a blazing red hammer and sickle and a slogan in red running across the top of the sticker reads: "May Day, May, Day, May Day".

A leaflet headed: "May Day Belongs to the Workers!", reads in part:

"All over the world workers celebrate May Day. In capitalist countries on all the continents the communist parties and workers' organisations hold May Day rallies and marches as part of their ongoing struggle. In the socialist countries like the Soviet Union where the workers have won power, May Day is a celebration of their victory and demonstration of their power and achievements.

"May Day has been celebrated over the years in South Africa, by our workers and their party. It is time we seized the Day again! Workers are now on the move as never before. The anger of the workers and our whole people is rising. We are uniting and organising against the hated Apartheid state which serves the capitalist bosses". Calling upon the workers to build democratic trade unions and people's organisations — within the community, the women and the youth — the leaflet says: "All over South Africa the workers must take up their historic role. We workers are the most exploited class. We are also the most revolutionary class who own nothing but our labour power and have nothing to lose but our chains. We the workers must show leadership. We the workers must be the soldiers. This is our historic role ... We have the ability, the strength, the numbers to win!"

Another Communist Party leaflet calls for support for the miners in their struggle with the Chamber of Mines. Headed "Stand by the Miners", the leaflet says:

"Miners are demanding a living wage. They are prepared to back their just demands with strike action. They are sick and tired of working long hours under dangerous and dirty conditions for a miserable wage.

"The miners are the backbone of the South African economy. Their sweat and labour has created South Africa's wealth. They earn super profits for the mine owners. But the mine bosses are greedy men. Black workers are amongst the most exploited workers in South Africa.

"Now the miners are angry. They know they deserve better pay and conditions. They are becoming better organised and united. They want militant action.

"The mine bosses have arrogantly dismissed the workers' demands. In fact they are seeking a test of strength. They fear the miners' growing power so they want to crush them before they get too strong. Behind the mine owners stands the Government. Already the mine bosses have called in their friends the police to shoot down protesting miners at Vryheid colliery."

Pointing out that throughout the mining industry the bosses are getting ready to crush the miners with batons and bullets, the leaflet says:

**“It is the duty of all our workers, all our people, to stand by the miners. It is only through working class solidarity and unity that we can improve our conditions and win our freedom. If the mine bosses and Government succeed in defeating the miners it will be a defeat for all workers and all oppressed people...”**

**“The South African Communist Party calls on all workers, all our people:**

**“Stand by the miners!**

**“Down with the mine bosses and the apartheid state!**

**“Down with oppression and exploitation!**

**“Forward to people’s power and a socialist South Africa!”**

**The Communist Party issued a number of leaflets during the campaign for the elections to the new Parliament.**

**“Fight the ‘New’ Constitution”, said one leaflet. “A Call to all workers. Despite our protests in 1961, an apartheid republic was forced on us. Again this year, our racist rulers are forcing us to accept what they call a ‘new’ constitution. All democrats have condemned it. It must be resisted and fought by all our people, with all our means”.**

**The leaflet points out that the Communist Party fights for a constitution which gives equal citizenship rights for all in an undivided country irrespective of race, colour, sex or religious belief, and which guarantees economic and social justice, “where apartheid will be outlawed, where the means of production will be owned by the people and where there will be no exploitation of man by man.**

**“We communists are sworn to destroy a constitution which**

**★ Results from talking with a selected few; ignores the demands of the majority and forces laws from above.**

**★ Represents the interests of the rich and their allies in the West.**

**★ Withholds equal voting rights and preserves power in the hands of the minority — gives stooge parliaments to Indians and Coloureds and Bantustans to the Africans.**

**★ Ignores human rights — denial of citizenship to the majority and makes them strangers in the land of their birth.**

**★ Entrenches the division of wealth and poverty, privilege and deprivation, which makes up South African society now.**

**★ Sends workers to a life of wage slavery, unemployment, landlessness, police brutality and prison.**

**“The rulers cannot rule in the same old way. The enemy has created the new constitution because their apartheid system is in serious trouble. They**



want to control our united struggle against them, because this makes it difficult for them to rule us.

"The new constitution and the Bantustans is an attempt to divide our united front. We must not submit. We must resist and fight with greater unity and more determined mass action!

"We call on all workers and all democratic forces to:

"Activate community organisations, women's, youth and cultural groups as **PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS**.

"Promote trade unions to take their rightful place amongst the democratic forces.

"Build a **PEOPLE'S UNITED FRONT!**

"Crush apartheid, the President's Council and Bantustans.

"Forward to a People's Constitution and a Socialist South Africa".

The sticker reproduced below is today to be found on walls and lampposts all over South Africa:

**COMMUNIST PARTY**

**says.....**



<b>NO!</b>	<b>to Puppet Parliaments</b>
<b>YES!</b>	<b>to Workers' Power</b>

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## **WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS?**

Once again the terroristic South African regime has resorted to assassination in an attempt to crush all opposition to its policies. On June 28 in Lubango, Angola, Jeanette Schoon, former student leader and activist in the revival of the independent trade union movement in South Africa, was killed by a parcel bomb together with her six-year-old daughter Katryn.

Both Jeanette and her husband Marius had worked in the external apparatus of the African National Congress, first in Botswana and later in Angola. While in South Africa both had been jailed for their opposition to apartheid, Marius for 12 years for alleged "sabotage" and Jeanette for three months under the no-trial detention laws. After their release, both were banned. In exile they were hounded and harassed by South African agents, but refused to be intimidated.

Jeanette said: "All political activists, whether they are inside or outside South Africa, have a real fear of assassination. Danger is nothing new. Wherever you are you have to accept danger".

In London in August, after giving evidence about the assassination to a sub-committee of the UN Human Rights Commission, Marius Schoon told pressmen that he remained at the disposal of the ANC for any assignment he might be offered. His fight against the racist regime would continue uninterrupted.

Inside South Africa underground cadres of the African National Congress distributed a leaflet headed "Who are the Terrorists?" We can but echo its sentiments. It reads as follows:

"Who killed Jeanette Curtis (her maiden name — ed.) and her young daughter? Who killed Tiro, Gqabi, Mxenge, Ruth First? Who killed Petrus and Jabu Nzima with a car bomb in Manzini? Who killed Saul Mkhize, Steve Biko, Neil Aggett, Lawrence Ndzanga, Babla Salojee, Looksmart Solwandle, Ahmed Timol, Solomon Mahlangu, Clifford Brown?

"Who killed our brothers and sisters at Matola and Maseru? Who slew the youth of Soweto and the youth throughout our land in 1976? Who is murdering the miners? Who shoots down the workers, and the mothers and children in cold blood?

"Everyone knows that the top terrorists are those who uphold the system. The government ministers and officials, the police, Special Branch butchers, soldiers and the impimpi running dogs are all part of the SADF (South African Death Force)!!! They are behind the bandits trying to topple and terrorise the governments and people of Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho. The hands of Botha-Malan and their gang of terrorists run red with the blood of our people.

"Everyone knows who the liberators are. The ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, Communist Party, the alliance of all democratic forces, and above all the WORKERS and the PEOPLE! This is the force, united and organised, using all forms of struggle including revolutionary armed struggle, that will overthrow the evil system of apartheid and all forms of oppression and exploitation. WE WILL NEVER BE INTIMIDATED!!!

"We dip our banner in memory of Jeanette Curtis and her daughter. Jeanette Curtis, member of the ANC, was a true daughter of our people. She will not be forgotten and has not died in vain. She has given her life to the most noble cause in the world — the liberation of the people. **HAMBA KAHLE** Jeanette and Katryn.

"The killers will not go unpunished. **DON'T MOURN — MOBILISE!** Amandla Ngawethu! Maatla Ke Arona!"



FROM A POSTER DESIGNED BY AKA FOR THE 1986-1987 YEAR



# **THE REAGAN- BOTH A AXIS THREATENS PEACE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS**

**By Inquilab**

**“Can we abandon a country which has stood beside us in every war we fought, a country that strategically is essential to the free world? It has production of minerals we must all have”.**

**— U.S. President Reagan**

The coming to power of the Reagan Administration which represents the most reactionary, chauvinist and militaristic circles of American monopoly capital has led to a sharp deterioration of international affairs.

The policy of “anti-Sovietism” and “rolling back communism” has been the pretext for the re-emergence of gun boat diplomacy in a bid to impose a Pax Americana. The US has become increasingly brazen in claiming the unilateral right to determine both whether a situation anywhere in the world constitutes a threat to its national security and/or the international order and what should be done about it. Already in 1963 Allen Dulles (Director of the CIA) had written:

"We cannot safely limit our response to the communist strategy of takeover solely to those cases where we are invited in by the government still in power. We ourselves must determine when and how to act."

The creation of rapid deployment forces, the installation in Europe of Pershing and Cruise missiles, the militarisation of space, the creation and support of counter revolutionary terrorist groups, the open support of fascist dictatorships, the creation of new bases throughout the world (including Africa), the arrogant and blatant use of American military power (as in Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Lebanon etc) are all aspects of this policy.

It is in this context that imperialist policies on South Africa must be analysed. Tactics may differ but successive western administrations have had one objective in mind and that is to preserve the status quo and prevent any genuine national and social emancipation anywhere.

The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker, in a major foreign policy speech in Honolulu in 1981, said:

"The US has no desire, for that matter no mandate, to act as the policeman of Africa. But let there be no misunderstanding: this country will not hesitate to play its proper role both in fostering the wellbeing of its friends in Africa and resisting the efforts of those whose goals are the opposite".

South Africa is an important component of world imperialism. She is the UK's second largest trading partner and is a growing and significant market for the US and other European countries. Almost all the major capitalist countries have substantial investments in SA. As *Fortune* magazine stated:

"SA has always been regarded by foreign investors as a gold mine, one of those rare and refreshing places where profits are great and problems small. Capital is not threatened by political instability or nationalisation. Labour is cheap, the market is booming, the currency hard and convertible."

As a major supplier of gold South Africa plays a key role in money supply and the financial stability of the capitalist world; it is also a major source of key minerals such as uranium, plutonium, diamonds, chrome, vanadium etc. Strategically the Cape is considered to be vital to western interests and the SA regime is regarded as a dependable ally. All in all South Africa is thought of as a reliable base from which imperialist interests in the region as well as in the rest of the continent can be protected.<sup>1</sup>

This is the basis for Crocker's statement that "The Reagan administration has no intention of destabilising South Africa in order to curry favour elsewhere". He explained that this was because "South Africa is an integral and important element of the global economic system, and it plays a significant economic role in its own region", and therefore the U.S. "will not support the severing of those ties." Crocker went on to announce that the

US would be initiating new strategies for the region. An important aspect of this would be the support of moderate forces and the destruction of the genuine liberation forces.

### **White Front Breaks Up**

Previously imperialism had been confident that its interests would be protected by the white minority regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia and by Portuguese colonialism. The independence of Angola and Mozambique, brought about by revolutionary armed struggle, and their stated commitment to socialism caused alarm in the imperialist camp. After the abortive attempt to overthrow the MPLA government the USA, which until then had been content to allow its allies and client states to do its policing, now declared Southern Africa to be its "sphere of influence". In May 1976 Kissinger told the Senate sub-committee on Africa:

"Events in Angola encouraged radicals to press for a military solution in Rhodesia. With radical influence on the rise, ... even moderate and responsible leaders — firm proponents of peaceful change — began to conclude that there was no alternative but to embrace the cause of violence. We were concerned about a continent politically embittered and economically estranged from the West; and we saw ahead a process of radicalisation which would place severe strains on our allies in Europe and Japan. There was no prospect of successfully shaping events in the absence of a positive political, moral and economic programme of our own in Africa"

Big brother was serving notice that henceforth he would be directly intervening in the affairs of Africa, especially Southern Africa. Kissinger had just returned from a major tour of Africa which included Liberia, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia and Zaire, to "present proposals aimed at bringing about moderate negotiated solutions to the urgent political problems of Southern Africa"<sup>2</sup>. He made a major speech in Lusaka which was the clearest exposition of US strategy. It basically called for-

- 1) Moderate African leaders to take the lead from the "men with the guns".
- 2) Dialogue between African states and South Africa.
- 3) The USA to serve as an intermediary between South Africa and the African states.
- 4) The USA to influence South Africa to put pressure on Ian Smith while African states had to pressurise liberation movements to stop armed struggle.
- 5) The USA to give economic assistance to the frontline states.

All this was accompanied by a massive campaign in the media as well as in academic treatises etc. stressing "the plight of the blacks"; support for "majority rule", understanding of the "grave economic problems" and the



need to give assistance; the desire to allow "Africans to solve their own problems", the need "for gradual evolutionary change" and the importance of giving the South African regime "respectability".

The new strategy was a response to the change in the international balance of forces; the mood of the American people after Vietnam and Watergate; the growing sharp contradictions and crisis in the capitalist countries and the upsurge of liberation struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America. A few years earlier (1973) the Rockefeller dynasty had established a new planning institution called the "Trilateral Commission". This brought together the major political and business leaders in the US, Europe and Japan. The commission reflected a desire by the multinationals to have a stable and secure environment in which to function. Its basic rationale was that expansionism could be adequately guaranteed if businessmen and politicians from the three regions addressed themselves *under American supervision* to world problems.

Trilateralism was particularly concerned with the so-called third world which was seen as a major source of instability. The Trilateralists were determined to ensure the stable supply of raw materials, cheap labour, expanding markets and repayment of debts. They were hostile to socialism or any form of genuine change. However they believed that by encouraging gradual social change, i.e. a minimum of social justice necessary for stability, they would avoid more radical changes that would affect their interests.

The "new" offensive in Africa reflected their global strategy. In the early period of Carter's administration the Trilateralists had a major influence on policy making. The "human rights" campaign was one reflection of this. In Southern Africa the U.S. administration (especially Secretary of State Vance and African affairs specialist Andrew Young) advocated a policy that would accommodate the African demand for majority rule in Rhodesia and Namibia but would safeguard western interests. The question of the rights of the oppressed in South Africa itself was left in the background.

Their approach was shared by the British Labour Cabinet Minister Anthony Crossland who told NATO ministers in 1976 that

"If the issues were settled on the battlefield, it would seriously lessen the chances of bringing about a moderate regime in Rhodesia and would open the way for more radical solutions and external intervention on the part of others".

The Carter administration launched a concerted campaign to achieve "orderly non-violent transfer of power in Rhodesia". The Anglo-American proposals for Rhodesia (September 1977) reflected the Trilateralist school of thought. The continuing all-round struggle of the liberation forces interfered

with the imperialist strategy until finally Zimbabwean independence was achieved in more favourable conditions. However imperialism continues to plot to retain Zimbabwe within the capitalist camp.

By the late 70's the accommodationist policies envisaged by the Trilateralists gave way to an escalation in cold war politics. Right-wingers became firmly entrenched in the corridors of power in the USA as well as in the UK, the FRG and other European countries. These born-again McCarthyite fanatics were committed to destroying "the evils of communism" at any cost. They found strong and ready support in the major sectors of the economy and the manufacturing industries linked to them.

### **What Price Majority Rule?**

In Southern Africa by late '77 and early '78 there was a marked shift in approach. The earlier focus on "peaceful transition to majority rule in Southern Africa" swung back to East vs. West confrontation in Africa. At the same time the Carter administration was orchestrating an anti-Soviet and anti-Cuban campaign. All attempts to make genuine changes in the socio-economic condition of the masses were dubbed as being instigated by Moscow. In South Africa the anti-communist hysteria reached new levels.

In his introduction to the 1977 Defence White Paper, P.W. Botha stated that "during the past two years there have been far reaching political, economic and military developments in both the global and regional context. Marxist militarism is casting a shadow over Africa." He went on to say that this increased the "strategic importance of the RSA to a Free World".

The similarity of positions emerging from the corridors of power in South Africa and Western capitals was no accident. To co-ordinate western action to deal with "the threat to African freedom from outside forces" the Carter Administration arranged a series of meetings in Washington, Paris and Brussels. President Nyerere, in a special message to foreign envoys in Tanzania in June 1978, commented:

"Whatever the official agenda, the Paris and Brussels meetings are not discussing the freedom of Africa. They are discussing the continued domination of Africa and the continued use of Africa by western powers. They are intended to be taken together as a second Berlin Conference...It will be concerned with neo-colonialism" and "with the use of Africa in the East-West conflict".

The process was accelerated by the coming to power of the Reagan administration in the USA, the Thatcher administration in the UK, the Kohl administration in the FRG, and the general right-wing trend in western Europe, Japan and Israel. Increasingly it became evident that the preservation of the South African regime (albeit in some modified forms) was

considered to be vital to the national interest of the west. Reagan's advisers basically come from 3 right-wing think-tanks-

- a) The Centre for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown university.
- b) The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University.
- c) The American Enterprise Institute.

Additionally many of his hawks come from the "Committee on the Present Danger and the Coalition of Peace through Strength". Many of them have a close and long-standing relationship with reactionary forces in Southern Africa.

The Present US strategy was first unveiled publicly by Crocker in his policy speech in Honolulu in 1981 when he stated:

"During the early months of this year we concluded that US and western interests can only be advanced by serious and determined US leadership aimed at strengthening the region's security and backing its development potential. We have defined a new regional strategy responsive to our national security, economic-commercial and political interests."

He explained how this strategy was based on 3 basic realities-

- a) US economic interests in Sub-Saharan Africa are heavily concentrated in Southern Africa.
- b) Southern Africa is an increasingly contested area in global politics.
- c) There are powerful linkages — transport systems, labour migration, electric power grids, flows of capital and expertise, active and vital trade ties. These bind together the states of Africa.

### **Consistent Policy**

The origins of present US policy can be traced back to 1969 when, under the direction of Kissinger, the National Security Council Interdepartmental group for Africa — consisting of representatives of the CIA and of the Depts. of State and Defence — prepared the notorious Memorandum 39, a comprehensive assessment of US Southern African strategies.

This study outlined 5 options for the US. Of these, Option 2 ("Tar Baby") was the one adopted by the Nixon and subsequent U.S. administrations. Memo 39 gives one of the most candid insights into US thinking and the various subterfuges and rationalisations used to support the apartheid regime and to protect the West's "vital interests" in the region.

Its basic conclusion was that the whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them. In a recent interview Crocker re-stated that:

“you cannot get Govt. changes in the right direction unless you have a white majority for change and a power base”.<sup>3</sup>

This emphasis on the whites being the main determining force is closely linked to the imperialist strategy of undermining the liberation struggle and finding neo-colonialist solutions. Memo 39 states that:

“There was no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which will only lead to chaos and increased opportunities for the communists”

Imperialism equates radical change and a threat to their interests with armed struggle and therefore every effort is made to stop the development of the armed struggle and to divert all resistance into “acceptable” and non-revolutionary channels. This placed them in a dilemma because the international community as a whole had accepted the legitimacy of the armed struggle in Southern Africa. This was the adopted position not only of the Organisation of African Unity but also of the Non-aligned Movement and the United Nations.

On the other hand the apartheid policies were universally condemned and there was a strong and continually growing movement demanding the total isolation of South Africa and support for the liberation forces.

It was clear that as long as South Africa remained a pariah of the world (the UN had declared Apartheid a “Crime against Humanity”) it would be difficult for imperialism to deny the legitimacy of the armed struggle or to use South Africa as a gendarme of its interests.

The problem was reflected by Nixon as early as 1970 when he stated:

“We cannot be indifferent to apartheid. Nor can we ignore the tensions created in Africa by the denial of political self-determination”.

Ten years later Crocker commented: “In political terms South Africa is not embraceable without our incurring massive diplomatic damage and risking severe domestic polarisation”. After outlining the importance of South Africa to the West he concluded that the long-term objective was the “emergence of a domestic order in SA that will permit the US to pursue a full and normal relationship with it”<sup>4</sup>.

Some of the basic prerequisites for this were:

- a) Solution of the Namibian problem.
- b) Reformist solutions in South Africa.
- c) “Detente” in the region.

## **Namibia**

A memo from Crocker to Secretary of State Haig in preparation for a meeting with Botha (1981) states:



“The problem of Namibia which complicates our relations with our European allies and with Black Africa is a primary obstacle to the development of a new relationship with SA. It also represents an opportunity to counter the Soviet threat in Africa.”

Thus it is clear that the US is interested in a resolution of the Namibian “problem”. However, a US-imposed solution cannot accord with the interests of the Namibian people because, as the same memo states, the US wants to co-operate with Pretoria to achieve a solution which would “safeguard US and South African essential interests and concerns”. In the actual discussions the US was more candid and Crocker told the South Africans that so long as the Namibian issue was not resolved the US could not “engage with South Africa in security” nor could South Africa be included in the “general security framework”.

However, the hypocrisy of the US approach is exposed by the fact that, despite all SWAPO’s attempts to secure a settlement in line with UN Security Council resolution 435, both the US and South Africa have sabotaged the UN initiative by bringing in the irrelevant issue of “linkage” with the presence of Cuban troops in Angola.

### **Reforms Inside South Africa**

The imperialists say they are interested in bringing about “a minimum of social change that will ensure stability” in South Africa. They hope this will give the apartheid regime some respectability, and will also isolate the liberation forces. To aid the process, both racists and imperialists are seeking to unearth collaborationist elements within the oppressed or to neutralise some sections.

The changes envisaged were defined by Memo 39, which revealed that the US would be willing to “accept political arrangements short of guaranteed progress toward majority rule, provided they assured broadened political participation in some form by the whole population”. In 1980 Crocker wrote that the call for a national convention of all parties to settle the South African problem had a “hollow” ring and that no action should be taken that would “destabilise South Africa” or jeopardise US economic and strategic interests”. In 1977 Carter’s security advisor Brzezinski stated that the US was trying “to encourage a process of change which will outpace what looks like a rather apocalyptic alternative. We are not putting pressure on South Africa to commit suicide.” Brzezinski had been chairman of the Trilateral Commission from 1973-76.

The Botha “reforms” are one consequence of this policy. The facade of the tri-cameral parliament, the changes in labour legislation, home “ownership”, increased local government powers for Africans, the Bantustan programme — are all attempts to undermine the revolutionary process. US and western leaders have not only orchestrated a massive propaganda campaign to spread the myth that meaningful “change” is taking place in South Africa but are actively involved in supporting these “changes”. In a major speech to foreign editors in June 1983, Haig (though no longer in office) said the US

“recognised that a measure of change is already under way in South Africa. At such a time when South Africans of all races, in and out of government, are seeking to move away from apartheid, it is our task to be supportive of this process so that prospects of reform and non-violent change can gain and hold the initiative ... We applaud the steps which are being taken to expand home ownership opportunities, trade union rights and access to education...

“If we wish to shape events, we must be prepared to take initiatives, make investments, support those things we believe in, build institutions and bridges. And we must be prepared to oppose those from outside Africa who claim a right to violent intervention.”

Enormous financial assistance is being poured into the country to trade unionists, students, entrepreneurs, government leaders, cultural and political movements, civic associations and religious organisations that are “committed to peaceful change”. The Reagan administration has undertaken several new programmes since 1981. To mention but a few: there is a 4 million dollar scholarship programme which takes about 100 black students to the US every year. Between 1983-84 an estimated 2 million dollars were made available for tutorial programmes to help students prepare for matric. In 1983 about 5 million dollars were earmarked for a scholarship programme inside SA. In co-operation with the AFL-CIO, programmes of support have been set up to “train labour leaders in SA in skills which will improve the collective bargaining ability of black and mixed trade unions and enhance the dialogue between the American and SA labour communities”. A project to support small business development in the black community was started by the US in 1983 — an estimated 3 million dollars earmarked for 1983-1984.

### **Regional Strategy**

The policy of giving South Africa respectability and controlling the process of change is closely linked with imperialism’s regional strategy.

Memo 39 recommended that the US “give increased and more flexible economic aid to Black states of the area to focus their attention on their internal developments and to give them a motive to cooperate in reducing tensions”. It went on to state that the US “would encourage economic assistance from South Africa to the developing Black nations”. In 1981 Crocker stated:

“We need policies that sustain those who would resist the siren call of violence and the blandishment of Moscow and its clients. The US enjoys fruitful ties with most of the African states in this region (Zaire, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland and Tanzania). We seek to strengthen and expand these relationships through diplomatic efforts,” and “through strong programs of foreign assistance and by fostering expanded trade and investment”.

In his 1980 study Crocker said the US view is that the “Republic offers neighbouring countries jobs and training in the modern sector, a demand for electric power and port facilities, a source of capital seeking external investments, outlets, a substantial market potential for raw materials and processed goods, and a source of expertise and experience in a wide range of developmental fields”.

This concept is in accord with the US global strategy of sub-imperialism, ie, the use of “middle-powers” to implement imperialist strategy in some of the following ways:

- a) Use of South African military aggression against neighbouring countries to force them into “detente” and greater economic integration as well as rejection of any progressive socio-economic or political changes.
- b) Economic pressure by SA to achieve the same aims.
- c) Economic diplomatic and subversive pressure by western governments to achieve the same aims.

In May 1981 the CIA Director William Casey issued a secret directive entitled “The Draft Plan of Operations in Africa and the Near East”. This called for intensification of subversive activities against “unfriendly countries”. The document makes clear that CIA strategists, in close collaboration with Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, Guatemala, South Africa and South Korea, were drawing up plans for subversive and terrorist activities in the countries of the regions involved.<sup>5</sup>

US officials are candid about the fact that in the last three years “they have helped define an agenda of change, negotiations and developments in which all the major players are now playing”.<sup>6</sup>

In 1981 Crocker had stated that US bilateral aid will be given to countries where US interests are clearly manifested and will be “focussed more to produce policy change of broad and lasting impact.” He went on to state that

this will mean greater private enterprise, and stressed that the US will use its power in the multilateral aid-giving agencies to ensure that the necessary "structural and policy" changes are made.

The US intends to use its economic assistance to control the economic development of African countries. Genuine socio-economic change, let alone socialism, is incompatible with this and will not be allowed. The deputy administrator of the Agency for International Development, Frank Coffin, recently stated that the Agency's "basic broadest goal is a long range political one. It is not development for the sake of sheer development. An important objective is to open up the maximum opportunity for domestic private initiative and enterprise and to ensure that foreign private investment particularly from the US is welcome and well treated". He went on to explain that a strong and private business community provides a "powerful force for stable responsible government and a built-in check against communist dogma".

The fact that AID is to be one of the major funders of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) set up by the frontline states to lessen their dependence on South Africa must be a cause for serious concern.

Similarly the IMF (which was one of the instruments created in the Kennedy "Alliance for Progress" era) is beginning to play a more significant role in Southern Africa. US Vice-President George Bush openly stated that the recent IMF loan of 1,000 million dollars to SA was "a way of seeking constructive relations and building bridges of communication with South Africa".<sup>7</sup>

For the ANC and the SACP the implications are serious. Memo 39 recommended that the US must take "diplomatic steps to convince the Black states in the area that their current liberation and majority rule aspirations in the South are not attainable by violence and that their only hope for a peaceful and prosperous future lies in closer relations with white dominated states".

In 1980 Crocker wrote that if South Africa's relations with its neighbours turn sour, or if African governments lose control of guerrillas targeted against Pretoria, the "fragile politics of the region would disintegrate in short order". He went on to say that the US must "be prepared to help governments to regain primacy over guerrillas on their own territory or if SA overplays its military superiority."<sup>8</sup>

The SADF has ravaged neighbouring countries. Large-scale military invasions have taken place, thousands of Namibians have been massacred.



South African refugees have been murdered in Matola and Maseru, bandit groups like MNR in Mozambique, UNITA in Angola and the LLA in Lesotho have been trained and equipped by the SADF, but there has been no protest from the west. In fact the western countries have vetoed any effective UN measures.

Thus it is clear that the thrust of US policy is against the liberation forces. It is widely believed that the visit of the head of the CIA, William Casey, to South Africa in 1982 was to help plan the creation of a cordon of states bordering SA to prevent infiltration by the ANC. The deal is believed to include assurances by the frontline states that they will confine ANC to political activities. In return South Africa will stop its aggression. It is in this overall context that one must view the various accords that the neighbouring countries are being forced to sign. In his Guardian interview Crocker stated that because of the Nkomati accords "the illusion that the armed struggle will solve South Africa's problems has been dealt a body blow. It could even be an irreversible body blow".

### **Liberation and "Terrorism"**

For this counter-revolutionary strategy to succeed, the US and its western allies are at one with the apartheid regime in considering it essential to destroy or subvert the liberation movement headed by the ANC. This is attempted in a variety of ways:

- ★ Most western countries are guilty of helping to develop the South African Defence Force and other repressive agencies of the regime. Various subterfuges have been used to circumvent the UN arms embargo against South Africa. Key South African military and security personnel have been trained in western countries and high-level contacts and visits are increasing. Internally the vicious security apparatus is strengthened to deal with "radical subversives".

- ★ Attacks are launched on the external apparatus of the ANC (Matola and Maseru), and prominent ANC personnel are assassinated.

- ★ Attempts are made to isolate the ANC from the frontline states, from other African countries and particularly to stem the flow of aid to the ANC from the socialist countries.

- ★ Attempts are made to halt aid from progressive forces in western countries by labelling liberation movements as "terrorist". In February 1981 Haig stated that he could not "visualise *any* circumstances under which the US government would approve or at least tolerate so-called national liberation movements".<sup>9</sup>

It is in this context that the activities of the US Senate Sub-Committee on Security and Terrorism should be viewed. Opening its hearings in 1982, the chairman, Senator Jeremiah Denton, said the sub-committee aimed to determine "the extent to which the USSR has successfully penetrated and in large measure taken over the direction of two organisations in Southern Africa — the ANC and SWAPO." He explained that because of the strategic and economic importance of Southern Africa to the west it was necessary for the committee to investigate the "Soviet, Cuban and East German involvement in the terroristic activities of the so-called liberation movements in Southern Africa".

In his testimony to the sub-committee Crocker, after blandly stating that the Soviet Union has "continued to play a very active role" in the ANC and SWAPO, argued that the ANC has been under "varying degrees of internal and external communist influence" and claimed that the introduction of communism to a basically African organisation had led to several divides and splits. He then went on to "categorically condemn all terrorist and other violent acts" allegedly perpetrated by the ANC and SWAPO.

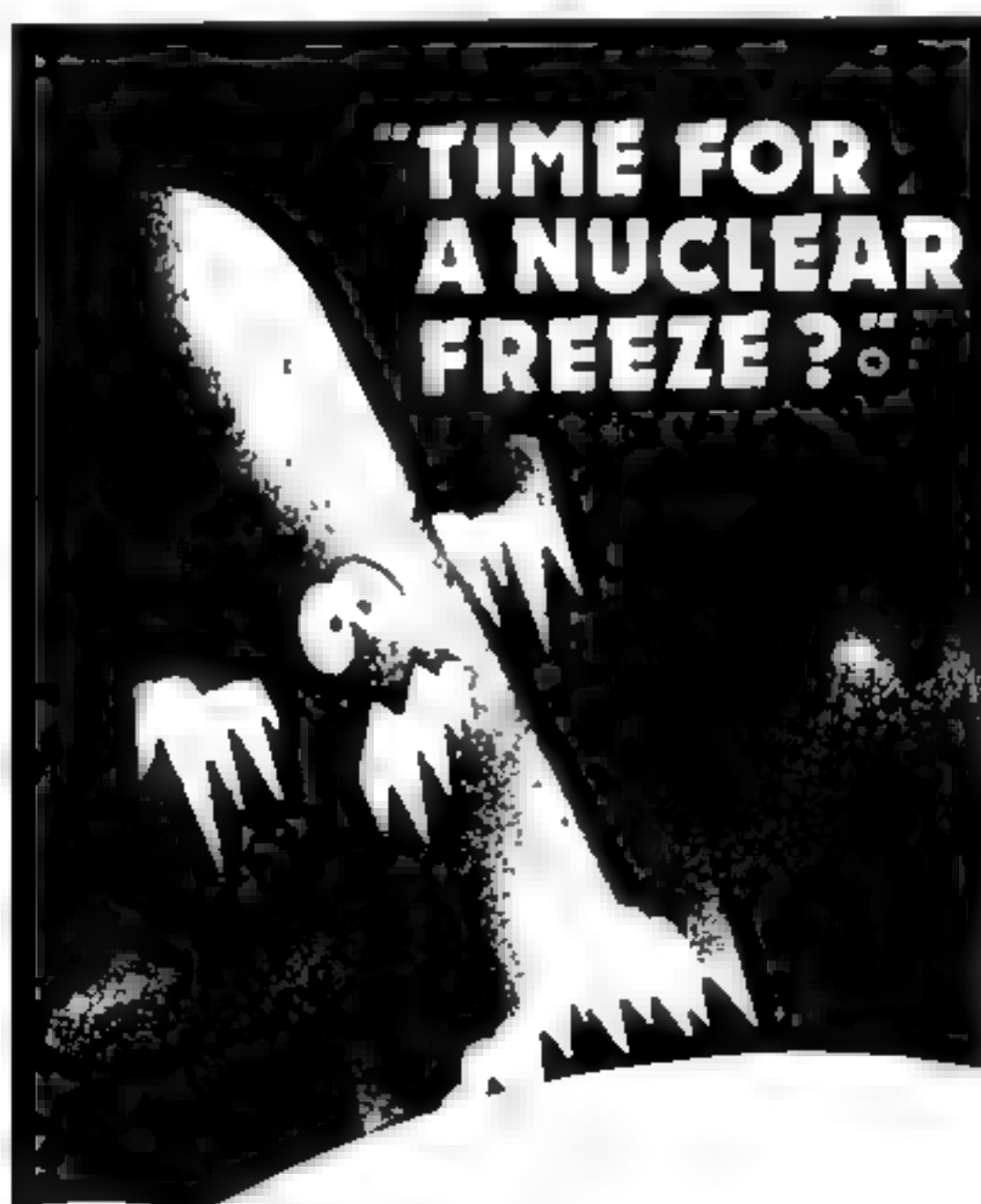
This hearing, which was the first of its kind on Southern Africa, has grave implications. True, nothing substantial has emerged from the sub-committee's activities so far. Nevertheless, it is clear that this was but the first salvo and that further McCarthyite attacks on the Southern African liberation movements can be expected as the US strategy unfolds. Denton himself stressed that the hearings would not have been possible without the "able assistance of the Department of State and the United States Embassy in Pretoria" and that the evidence presented to the sub-committee would not have been "possible without the help of the South African government".

This new "linkage" of the liberation movements with terrorism has been copied in Britain, where the Tory government has just pushed through Parliament a Terrorism Act which opens the way for action against the ANC and SWAPO. The people's fight for freedom is being equated with terrorism because the "vital interests" of the west are at stake.

It is because South Africa is the main base of imperialism on the African continent that imperialism has intensified its activities (a) to maintain the regime in existence and (b) to direct and control all processes of change. Bearing in mind imperialist co-responsibility for the appalling atrocities which have been perpetrated against our people in the recent period, we in the liberation movement should never forget that, despite all their protestations about human rights and their "detestation of apartheid", the friends of our enemies are our enemies.

## References

1. US private investments in South Africa had reached about \$3,000 million in 1983 (approximately half of all American capital investments in Africa). The trade between the two countries amounted to about \$5000 million in 1982. The USA imports all its diamonds, 80% of its platinum, 55% of its uranium, 88% of its cobalt, 44% of its manganese and large quantities of copper, zinc, tin, asbestos, chromium and vanadium from South Africa and Namibia. Over 540 American companies (including most of the largest) operate in South Africa.
2. South African *Financial Mail*, 1977.
3. *Guardian*, 20.7.84.
4. Crocker, 1980 Study — US Policy for the 80s.
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# **U.S. EAGLE OVER AFRICA**

## **Reagan's Foreign Policy Threatens Our Independence**

**T. Sifunasonke**

No United States Administration has gone further in its attempts to transform the African continent into an exclusive enclave of American domination than that of Ronald Reagan. Africa has been assigned the role of "an advanced frontier" of US imperial interests and Washington's dollar dependencies as "the frontline allies". From Cape to Cairo, from Monrovia to Mogadishu, the Reagan Doctrine of "manifest destiny" has attempted to draw Africa into the orbit of American "strategic interests". This doctrine is premised on a number of strategic objectives: to extend and consolidate capitalism on a world-wide basis and, within this, to promote US finance-industrial capital as the dominant fraction of international imperial interests; to "roll back the frontiers of communism" and, if needs be, to wipe out the Soviet Union as a "twentieth century power"; to eliminate the growing force of socialism internationally; to control the pace and direction of the national liberation movements throughout the world in conformity with the needs of international imperialism; to isolate, discredit and smash the anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly forces in the capitalist countries, especially the communist parties.



The sustained and concerted assault on Africa's independence, unity and non-aligned policy is an integral part of this doctrine which has been elevated into the main ideological and political platform of US foreign policy. Before attempting to examine the character, scope and consequences of this doctrine for Africa it is well that we remind ourselves of the forces within the United States standing behind Reagan and the promotion of his Administration's foreign policy dictates.

### **The Reagan Administration and the Military-Industrial Complex (MIC)**

It has become fashionable in popular journalism to characterise Ronald Reagan as a mere "B-movie actor" without analysing the forces which back him. To focus solely on Reagan in order to understand US policy is to miss the point completely. Behind Reagan and the present Administration is a group of financiers, industrialists and munitions manufacturers who form the nucleus of the MIC. This coalition of forces based primarily in California, but with links throughout the United States, comprises the "most reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist sectors of finance capital".<sup>1</sup> Its emergence as a power-bloc within the United States has been traced to the days of the second World War.<sup>2</sup>

Those years witnessed the mushrooming of a huge war industry in California. The decisive finance institution which funded the US armaments programmes and military corporations was the Bank of America which had become the largest and most powerful bank by exploiting the savings and financial needs of the scores of little farmers mortgaged to it.

"Into the Bank's orbit came the biggest corporations engaged on military orders — the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Rockwell International (previously called North American Aviation), McDonnell-Douglass Aircraft, Litton Industries, Hughes Aircraft, Edgar Kaiser's steel and shipbuilding monopoly, the Bechtel shipbuilding concern and other firms that grew richer every day."<sup>3</sup>

The merging of interests between the finance, industrial and military monopolies laid the basis for the emergence in the US of the military industrial complex. It also established the "California Group" as one of the most powerful circles among the US ruling class. Since the war years the power and influence of the MIC has been extended as US policy relied more and more on international force and violence to meet the objective of maximising profits at home and abroad. Economic dominance of the "California Group" and the MIC moved increasingly in the direction of political leverage in the forums of policy-making. The group established

links with other sections of finance capital throughout the United States which backed the most aggressive and reactionary wing of the Republican Party and US imperialism.

Ronald Reagan was catapulted into the governorship of California and later into the White House by the massive backing of the "California Group" and the military-industrial complex.

A feature of the military-industrial complex is the direct linkup between the representatives of finance industry, the military corporations and the top military brass from the Pentagon. Victor Perlo points out that during the 1970's, 343 officers and civilians from the Pentagon and another 17 high-ranking officers of the military-oriented US Space Agency left their government jobs to take up executive posts in the Northrop Corporation, a California-based military research and production monopoly, whilst 17 top Northrop employees moved over to these military agencies.<sup>4</sup>

The same writer reveals that US foreign policy is formulated by a core of eight men — Ronald Reagan, Caspar Weinberger, George P. Shultz, George Bush, William Casey, William Clark, James Baker III and Edwin Meese III. Of these, five are representatives of the "California Group" of finance, industrial and military monopolies, two are from the Texas-based oil, electronics and military corporations and one, William Casey, is directly connected with Wall Street. Within this core group, Ronald Reagan and Caspar Weinberger are the main propagandists and promoters of the MIC.

"These old 'friends', veteran right-wing California politicians, multi-millionaires, servitors of the transnational corporations (Reagan — General Electric; Weinberger — Bechtel), rabid militarists and anti-communist, anti-Sovieteers are, in addition, anti-working class and overtly racist."<sup>5</sup>

In the hands of this group US foreign policy has shifted decisively away from detente and the policy of nuclear strategic balance. In their place are substituted the policies of confrontation and military force to settle international disputes, and nuclear superiority and a first-strike capability against the Soviet Union. As Victor Perlo remarks:

"It (i.e. the MIC — ed.) considers the nuclear bomb to be the saviour of the otherwise doomed capitalist system, calculating that only they (i.e. the representatives of the MIC — ed.), the self appointed designates, will survive and inherit a ruined — but capitalist — world"<sup>6</sup>

The question that needs to be answered is: why and under what conditions have the Reaganites embarked on such a dangerous foreign policy path?

## **The Roots of the Present Foreign Policy Line**

The main reasons for the shift in US foreign policy are to be found in the profound changes that took place internationally in the period before Reagan's assumption of power. Chief among these were: the continued growth and development of the Soviet Union and the countries of real socialism, the intensification and victories of the national liberation movements during the decades of the sixties and seventies and the political and economic crises that afflicted the major capitalist countries during the latter half of the 1970's and early 1980's. All these factors contributed to the weakening of US and international imperialism and forced a re-evaluation of policy and strategy to maintain and perpetuate the world-wide system of exploitation and domination.

Throughout the sixties and seventies the Soviet Union and the socialist community extended the material base of socialism. Over the last three decades the growth rates of the socialist countries have been consistently higher than those of the major capitalist countries. With this has come a rise in the standard and quality of life of the people of the socialist countries. Social services, medical care, education and a whole array of benefits became increasingly available to the people. Above all, unemployment has been unknown throughout the socialist countries.

At the same time the world system of socialism increased the defence capability of each country through the organisation of collective security against the threat of imperialist war. The parity in nuclear capability attained by the Soviet Union in relation to the United States guaranteed the security of socialism and world peace. Under the conditions of detente entered into between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1970's (though the groundwork for this had been laid earlier) world security was guaranteed.

Peace and detente, however, did not lead to a lessening of the struggles of the working people against capitalist exploitation, nor the relaxation of the international competition between the two main social systems of our epoch — socialism and capitalism.

The decade of the seventies witnessed the brilliant victories of the forces of national liberation in many parts of the world where reactionary regimes existed. In Vietnam the United States suffered one of the most devastating defeats ever inflicted on an imperialist power. This was closely followed by the victories of the peoples of Kampuchea and Laos. On the African continent the victories of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and the Cape Verde islands marked the end of 500 years of Portuguese colonialism. A new revolutionary power emerged

in Ethiopia against the feudal rule of Haile Selassie. The Shah of Iran was overthrown by a popular revolution which shook the confidence of imperialist circles in the rule of despots against the people. In Latin America the bloody dictatorship of Somoza was finally vanquished by the armed revolution of the Sandinista movement. Grenada opted for radical transformation with the New Jewel Movement led by Maurice Bishop. Whilst these victories sounded across the world, fresh and continued struggles for national liberation were being escalated in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, the Western Sahara, El Salvador and many other parts of the world where anti-people regimes clung to power through the assistance of imperialism.

Even as the political, economic and ideological frontiers of imperialism were rapidly shrinking, crisis struck within the very heart of the major capitalist countries, including the USA. The second half of the 1970's and the 1980's saw a sustained economic crisis hit all the capitalist countries — from the USA to Europe and Japan. Growth rates declined, investments shrank, the volume of world trade decreased, inflation spiralled and unemployment soared to heights unheard of since the Great Depression of 1929-1933. Within the United States the crisis was much more dramatic than in other capitalist countries undermining the illusion in the minds of millions of Americans of the superiority of "the American way of life". While the victories of socialism and the national liberation movements weakened US and international imperialism, inter-imperialist rivalry contributed to a decisive decline in the positions and strength of US imperial interests.

In the 1970's the USA lost nearly 23 per cent of the world commodity markets, resulting in a loss of approximately 125 billion dollars annually and nearly 2 million jobs through intensified competition with other capitalist countries. In the period 1971-1980 the US share of total industrial output in the world declined to 17.3 per cent from 25 per cent in the previous decade. During the same period the US share of production of telecommunications equipment declined from 28.5 to 14.5 per cent, the production of motor vehicles from 22.6 to 13.9 per cent and aircraft for civilian use from 70.9 to 58.0 per cent. In 1960 nearly 95 per cent of all TV and radio sets sold in the United States were American manufactured. By 1979 foreign-made products had captured nearly 50 per cent of this market.<sup>7</sup>

The dimensions and character of the economic crisis in the USA had far-reaching social and political consequences.



## **Inside Reagan's USA**

The capture of state political power by the most reactionary and aggressive section of US imperialism through Reagan signalled the ascendancy of the military-industrial complex in shaping the internal and international policies of the Administration. Peace and detente are anathema to the giant armaments corporations. Under their impetus the military budget of the United States first topped the 100 billion dollar mark in 1978 when Carter was President. Under Ronald Reagan this amount has more than doubled — to an estimated 215 billion dollars by 1983; and it is projected to double again by 1988 to approximately 386 billion dollars if Reagan wins the 1984 elections. Military “procurements”, which provide the richest source of profits to the armaments manufacturers, almost tripled from 20 billion dollars in 1978 to 55 billion dollars in 1983 and are estimated to reach 131 billion dollars by 1988. During 1982, despite the generalised crisis afflicting the US economy and international capitalism, the profits of the arms manufacturers rose by 23 per cent over the previous year while the profits of all large corporations combined declined by 24 per cent.<sup>8</sup>

That the Reagan Administration is a government of big business for big business can hardly be hidden from the American people. When Reagan took office unemployment stood at 7.4%. It now stands at well over 10% — more than 12 million workers have been thrown into the dole queues. Programmes for health, education, unemployment and pensions benefits, public transport, maternity benefits and other social welfare benefits have been drastically slashed. The result has been the most sustained assault on the welfare and living standards of the working people in the USA for the last 50 years. More than 250 social programmes affecting the working people, especially the deprived, discriminated and underprivileged among the black and Hispanic peoples, have been affected. In the fiscal year 1982-1983 the US Administration cut these programmes by some 35 billion dollars and cuts totalling another 27 billion dollars were proposed for 1983<sup>9</sup>. In an article published by the London *Observer* it was revealed that the number of people living below the official poverty level had increased by 3.1% by 1983 representing some 15% of the population, or 34.4 million people<sup>10</sup>. Big Business, however, was enjoying a tax bonanza: during Reagan's term of office US corporate taxes were slashed from an amount accounting for 24% of the Federal Budget to just 7%.<sup>11</sup>

Very few US Administrations have boasted of such an open alliance between government and big business, or such savage assaults on the working class and deprived sections of the American people.

It is within this general context that we must examine the Reagan Administration's Africa Policy.

### **US Foreign Policy and Africa**

Given Washington's thrust toward world dominance, Africa has come to play a more important role in the global strategy of US imperialism than at any time in the past. The main objectives of US foreign policy have been: to break the political unity of the African states expressed through the OAU; to promote the establishment of a "counter-force" to the growing anti-imperialist front in Africa by encouraging the creation of a coalition of governments and forces more amenable to US foreign policy dictates; to maintain the African continent as a vital source of strategic raw materials for the western capitalist countries and as a source of super-profits to the transnational corporations, and to establish an extensive network of military bases in and around the African continent as a weapon against the free and full development of African independence, the national liberation movement and the socialist-oriented states in particular.

#### **1. The Threat against African Unity and the Liberation Movement.**

The 19th summit of the OAU in August, 1982, became the focal point of a concerted effort by the Reagan Administration to wreck African unity. Three main issues were used: the venue and chairmanship of the 19th session of the OAU, the civil war in Chad and the Polisario Front's right to take its place at the summit.

It is now patently clear that the United States orchestrated a campaign of hate and vilification against Colonel Gaddafi in order to prevent the 19th summit from being convened in Tripoli, Libya and, as is the tradition, for the head of state of the host country to assume chairmanship of the OAU for the coming year. This was a most obvious attempt by the United States to overturn a decision of the member states of the OAU taken at the previous summit in Nairobi, in July, 1981. At the time the US Administration made it quite clear that

"...if that tradition were followed in 1982 we would look upon it with deep regret, since we believe Libya to be a most inappropriate spokesman for the peace and regional stability for which the OAU stands and which we wholeheartedly support."<sup>12</sup>

To give the real lie to the Reagan Administration's new-found concern for Africa's "peace and regional stability" we need only note what Chester Crocker, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, had to say

about the affair: Libya's "diplomacy of subversion in Africa and in the Arab world", he informed a Senate Foreign Relations Committee, represented "an unprecedented obstruction to our own interests and objectives"<sup>13</sup>

During this time the US State Department issued a secret memorandum to all American ambassadors in Africa (the document was subsequently published by the *Christian Science Monitor*<sup>14</sup>) objecting to the summit being held in Tripoli and advising them to seek the assistance of "moderate" African states to boycott the session. As part of this diplomatic offensive the Reagan Administration sent out a number of high-ranking officials to promote the US policies, among them, Chester Crocker, Jean Kirkpatrick, US representative at the UN, and Vice-president George Bush.

The civil war in Chad was, and continues to be, an issue on which the US acted in concert with its NATO ally, France, in keeping a pro-western ally, Hissein Habre, in power against the progressive forces of the GUNT, the organisation previously in power and recognised by the OAU as constituting the legitimate political authority in Chad (see *The African Communist* No 96). Habre, in fact, came to power as a result of being armed and financed by the CIA with the active collaboration of Sudan and a number of other reactionary regimes in Africa. At the time of the 1982 OAU summit the forces under the GUNT were making a determined drive to regain power. Imperialism was determined to thwart this and the arrival in Tripoli of the GUNT representatives became another issue around which to organise African and Arab forces prepared to play Washington's game of driving a wedge into African unity.

The war in the western Sahara between the colonising power, Morocco, and the liberation forces of the Polisario appeared to be an issue which on the surface afforded least opportunity to the Reagan Administration to interfere in the affairs of the OAU. After all, the OAU itself had recognised the political arm of Polisario, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), as the sole, authentic political leader of the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara. However, American military interests in this region were clearly being threatened by the anti-imperialist forces within the Polisario Front and Washington found a natural ally in the colonial regime of Morocco to block the SADR delegation at the summit.

In the course of this attempt by US imperialism to wreck the OAU 19th summit it also became clear that the aim was much deeper: to cause the permanent rupture of the organisation and create a "counter-force" of moderate states through which American foreign policy could be promoted much more easily. This becomes evident from the policy document

circulated by the United States representative at the UN, Jean Kirkpatrick, to "principal US posts" abroad which, among others, made it clear that the United States meant to establish "political dominance over key strategic zones" throughout the world, including Africa. Those countries which pursued "an open or concealed anti-American policy" had to be "isolated ... or set against one another".<sup>15</sup> Among such states were mentioned Libya, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Algeria and Madagascar.

It should also be noted in this respect that the policy of "rewarding" African states for their moderate and pro-American positions and "punishing" those who criticise and are hostile to American ambitions has become a feature of foreign policy of the Reagan Administration. This was most noticeable in the case of those African governments which condemned the US invasion of Grenada — they found their "aid" packages either slashed or cancelled. As an example of this, Zimbabwe suddenly found its proposed aid of 75 million dollars cut by almost half "following its support for a UN resolution deploring the intervention in Grenada" and its "failure to support various American resolutions in the United Nations, notably that condemning the shooting down of the Korean airliner".<sup>16</sup>

What became equally clear at the time of these US manoeuvres was that a number of African and Arab states were quite prepared to serve Washington in its drive to establish "political dominance".

In its attempts to restrict the influence of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, to isolate and smash the progressive anti-imperialist forces and the socialist-oriented states, the Reagan Administration has relied on a strategy of creating and reinforcing reliable African allies as a "counter-force" throughout the continent. These "frontline forces" of American imperialism number among them Liberia and Morocco in the West, Egypt in the North, Sudan, Somalia and Kenya in the East, Zaire and Hissein Habre's Chad in Central Africa and the Republic of South Africa in the South. These dollar dependencies of Washington and the Pentagon have been assigned the role of "advanced frontiers" for the defence and promotion of the zones of "vital interests" of the United States.

What are these "vital interests" of the USA on the African continent and how does the Reagan Administration purport to defend and promote these with its allies?

## **2. The Economic dimension of US Foreign Policy.**

The crisis of strategic raw materials facing the capitalist countries has made Africa a "natural" source, since a large number of these are found in



abundance in Africa. Thus the western countries and especially the United States, the largest single consumer of strategic raw materials, have come to depend heavily on Africa for supplies. However, imperialism has never been willing to enter into fair and mutually beneficial economic relationships with African states or the underdeveloped countries of the world. History points rather to the opposite — the exploitation of the raw material reserves of these countries to the advantage of the capitalist countries and the profits of the transnational corporations.

The basic contradiction between imperialism and the developing countries in this sphere has been brought out by the operations of the giant TNC's to obtain the raw materials at the lowest possible price, so ensuring super-profits for their shareholders. This conflicts with the need of the developing countries to obtain prices which are fair, so as to be able to sustain and expand production and their economies in general. Africa contains some of the world's largest reserves of strategic materials. Today, some 40 minerals required by the production processes in the capitalist countries are to be found in Africa. Thus the US imports some 48% of chromium, 82% of platinum, 87% of manganese, 67% of gold, 73% of vanadium and other "strategics" such as tin, copper, bauxite and cobalt from Africa, especially from South Africa.

Over the last decade or so African states, like many of the developing countries over the world, have expressed the clear desire and formulated policies and plans to control their own resources, to restructure their relationships with the capitalist countries and change the terms of trade on an equitable basis. This has been most clearly expressed in the drive for the New Economic Order. Such moves have been seen by imperialism as a threat to their continued domination of Africa's material and human resources and the super-profits derived by the TNC's.

In the case of Africa, American-based TNC's made 50% more profits from investments than in all the developing countries together. Between 1970 and 1978 the inflow of investment capital to Africa was 4.3 billion dollars and the outflow of profits 15.92 billion dollars. As a result of the lending policies of the banking TNC's Africa's foreign debt had grown to 21.1 billion dollars in 1979. It has been estimated that almost a third of the loans are used to pay interest on these debts.<sup>17</sup>

An ILO study revealed that, far from aiding Africa in the creation of development projects, nearly 60% of all foreign investment goes toward the exploitation of Africa's natural mineral and strategic resources, another 34% in creating new markets for the finished manufactures of the capitalist economies and 6% toward the transfer of transnational production processes to exploit the labour-power of African workers.

Two opposing tendencies have manifested themselves in Africa in relation to the exploitative policies of the TNC's: on the one hand the tendency toward a greater facility in the economic structures of countries for the penetration of transnational finance-capital; and on the other hand the tendency toward their restriction and control within the developing strategy of a given national economy. It is precisely such differences which characterise the main political tendencies in Africa today: toward a greater dependency on imperialism and its main instrument — the transnational corporations, and conversely toward greater economic independence. The states pursuing the former policy have come to be the allies of imperialism in Africa, whereas the states forming the latter group of countries are in the forefront of the drive toward full independence, against neo-colonial exploitation and imperialism.

It is against this latter group of states that the Reagan Administration has declared political, economic and diplomatic war. Under the smokescreen of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism, the Reagan Administration has moved decisively to militarise the African continent as a means of preserving it as the object of exploitation of the TNC's as well as to establish it as "NATO's southern flank" to counter so-called "Soviet expansionism".

### **The Military Dimension**

The military-industrial complex and the Pentagon have abandoned their previous policy of relying on the strength of client states to promote American political, economic and military objectives. Instead, American military policy has increasingly moved in the direction of direct presence through the establishment of key military bases in a number of African states. Apart from this obvious presence, the role of the CIA has been enormously enhanced. According to the *Tricontinental*, "the CIA has been very active in Africa, where it has 40 stations and 3,500 agents"<sup>18</sup> involved in subverting the continent for the easier penetration of imperialism, or financing and arming counter-revolution.

In the west, two countries — Morocco and Liberia — have clearly become the staging posts for US military plans.

In 1956, at the time of Morocco's independence, there were five military bases of the United States in various parts of the country. In 1959 the Moroccan king was forced to ask the US to evacuate all its military personnel and bases as a result of strong pressure from the progressive movement led by El Mehdi Ben Barka. However, under the Reagan Administration, pressure to provide the Americans with military bases succeeded in 1982. Morocco,

pursuing its colonial war against the people of the Western Sahara under the banner of the Polisario Front, turned increasingly to Washington for military and financial assistance.

It was under these conditions that Alexander Haig, then US Secretary of State, successfully negotiated the return of some of the more important base facilities to the USA. Since then US aid to Morocco has more than trebled — from 30 million dollars to 100 million. Simultaneously, a large number of military advisers, technicians and US military personnel have been arriving in Rabat in a steady stream, both to supervise and train the Moroccans in their colonial wars against the Polisario and to work on the re-establishment of base facilities for the US military and navy.<sup>19</sup>

After the army coup which unseated the Tolbert regime in Liberia, the US State Department moved swiftly to “save Liberia from subversion”. To save Samuel K. Doe’s tottering regime of reaction the United States pumped in massive aid to the tune of 33 million dollars and pushed through an IMF loan of 85 million dollars. The purpose was two-fold: to save the estimated 430 million dollars of US foreign investment and retain Liberia as an important military outpost of the Pentagon on the west coast of Africa.

Liberia had assumed an important role as the central transmitting station to the Middle East, Soviet Union and Africa of the US propaganda station, *The Voice of America*.<sup>20</sup> At the same time Liberia was also a junction of telecommunications between Washington and its diplomatic corps in Africa.

### **East Coast Bastions**

The picture of US military penetration of Africa is more alarming on the east coast. Contrary to OAU and UN resolutions to maintain the Indian Ocean area as a zone of peace, the Pentagon has been busy transforming the ocean and a number of the states located in the zone into military preserves of the US Navy and the Rapid Deployment Force. Diego Garcia, illegally “sold” to the United States by Britain, has become the central command post of the RDF and a major staging post for the US Navy, air force and army. Diego Garcia belongs to Mauritius and the demand by its government for the return of the island has met with the support of the OAU and the heads of state of the non-aligned countries.

At the same time American military, political and economic “aid” has flowed into east African countries which have allowed the presence of US bases. In Kenya, three military bases suitable for use by the US navy and aircraft carriers have been built. Bases have been set up to provide Somalia,

and American military bases have been negotiated with the Sudan in a number of areas.

However much the United States may talk about "peace and regional stability" in Africa, the facts point conclusively to a sustained drive by the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex to involve Africa in an active role in their campaign directed against the Soviet Union and the socialist states. In the process the independence and unity of the majority of African states are being undermined.

Since the signing of the Camp David Agreement, Egypt has become inexorably drawn into the network of US strategic strike capability. In return for massive economic and military "aid", estimated to be around 3.5 billion dollars<sup>21</sup>, the Egyptian regime has allowed the US RDF base facilities in the Sinai, thus effectively exchanging Israeli occupation of that area for an American one. Along with this have been the attempts to seal a strategic coalition between Egypt, Sudan and the regime of Hissein Habre in Chad thus effectively pointing a dagger at the heart of the African continent. In central Africa American diplomacy and the promise of "aid" appear to have been successful in drawing Mobutu's Zaire into the pattern of US "forward areas" on the African continent. According to some reports, the Pentagon has completed a deal with the Mobutu regime for the siting of an air base and a test site for the Cruise missile.<sup>22</sup>

Undoubtedly the racist South African regime plays a crucial role in the Pentagon's African strategy. The Reagan Administration has moved into open support of the Pretoria regime through its policy of "constructive engagement". It is well-known that before Reagan's presidency, South Africa had already been integrated into NATO's communications network. Apart from the visits of high-powered South African military delegations to the United States since Reagan came into power, the South Africans have also benefitted from the Administration's lifting of the embargo for the sale of sophisticated computer technology specially designed for nuclear research and development. At the same time, Reagan also sanctioned the sale of quantities of plutonium-3, a vital component in the production of nuclear weapons.

The carrot dangled by the US Administration in front of African states whose cooperation was actively canvassed has been military and economic "aid". The Reagan Administration has bumped up this element of US foreign policy to unprecedented levels. Apart from Egypt, such aid to African countries amounted to 120 million dollars in 1981. By 1983 it had skyrocketed to 474 million dollars — the bulk of it going to its "dollar allies": Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Somalia, Tunisia, Zaire and Sudan.<sup>23</sup>



## Conclusion

Whatever the outcome of the US elections it is clear that African patriots and the anti-imperialist, progressive forces and states of Africa have the vital task of reversing the disastrous schemes which the Reagan regime has concocted for our continent with the aid of its dollar allies. Africa's progress, unity and independence depend on it. We have the means to succeed. What is required is the political will to see it through. Nor will we be isolated in this mammoth task: the national liberation movements of the world, the progressive, anti-imperialist forces in the capitalist states and the world socialist community are on our side.

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# AS A WOMAN, MY PLACE IS IN THE PARTY

By Rosita

August Bebel concludes his book "Woman and Socialism" by saying "The future belongs to socialism, that is, primarily, to the worker and to woman."

I came to realise this simple truth not very long ago. Classified Coloured by the racist regime, and born of a working-class family, my childhood and youth are similar to that of millions of young black people in the country. My father, a hardworking man, always strove to give us the best, and instil in us a love for knowledge and learning, respect for the next man whatever his colour or race. He treated us children, eight in all, equally. He actively took part in the upbringing of his children. When time allowed he would look through our notebooks, even conduct a class in geography (his favourite subject). He would prepare a meal on some Sundays (his only day off) even clean the house and sew his own shirts. It was my father who taught me how to change a shirt collar! That was my father, unbelievable but true all the same. I mention these few things about my father, for it was he who taught us girls that to be born a woman means to work and study, even fight harder in order to become a 'somebody' in life; that a woman can achieve what a man can, only she has to work harder.

In looking back I believe that the seed of doubt and mistrust of the order of things was planted then already. How well I remember the feeling of hurt and despair when told "stay out of it, it's not for girls". Or when having laboured the whole afternoon and well into the evening trying to draw a human heart demanded by our biology teacher, and on presenting it the next day to be told by the teacher, "It is not you but your brother who did it". In his poor crooked mind a girl could not draw better than a boy. And I was a girl. In later years when I had to decide what to do after completing high school I was

to learn yet another lesson of the realities of the South African situation. To be an air hostess was always my dream, but my childhood dream could not become true because I was told, "It is only for whites" and I was a black.

This and countless other experiences set my mind at work. I began to question things which before had seemed quite normal. I started to read. The nearest material at hand was SASO newsletters which my elder brother had brought home following a strike at Western Cape University. Later SASO friends introduced me to Malcom X, George Jackson, Regis Debray and others. But these authors did not answer to the full the many questions which gnawed by restless soul. However, they did help me to stop using "Wella Straight" on my hair. I began to comb an Afro instead, and started to think of myself as black and not some "bruin Afrikaner". I began to look at myself and my community as part of an oppressed, deprived and humiliated people.

At the time of the June 16 uprisings, when black youth confronted racist bullets with dustbin lids, when only the indifferent could not be stirred by these events in the country, I then made my decision. Along with hundreds of young people from Soweto, Bonteheuwel and other black townships, I and some close friends who were largely responsible for my political awareness and development joined the ANC and its fighting wing. In the ANC I began to read books about socialism. Not the classics of Marxism-Leninism but ordinary books about the new way of life in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, about what these countries were before and what they are now. One book dealing with the question of women in the Soviet Union especially interested me. I was deeply impressed by what I had learned and wanted confirmation. I questioned again and again comrades who had had the opportunity to visit one or other socialist country.

As my interest in these countries and in socialism grew, so did my interest in the South African Communist Party. I wanted to know more about communists: who they are, how they live and work, simply everything about them. In my quest I read *Moses Kotane, Naked Among Wolves*, Lenin's biography *Prison Diary* and many others including Soviet novels about the second world war. From these and discussions with comrades I learnt that communists are the best sons and daughters of any nation, the most steadfast, valiant and courageous fighters of the working people; that communists stint neither life nor limb in the fight for the people's interests. They are conscientious workers, highly principled with incorruptible morals, the beacon and lightbearers of a nation.

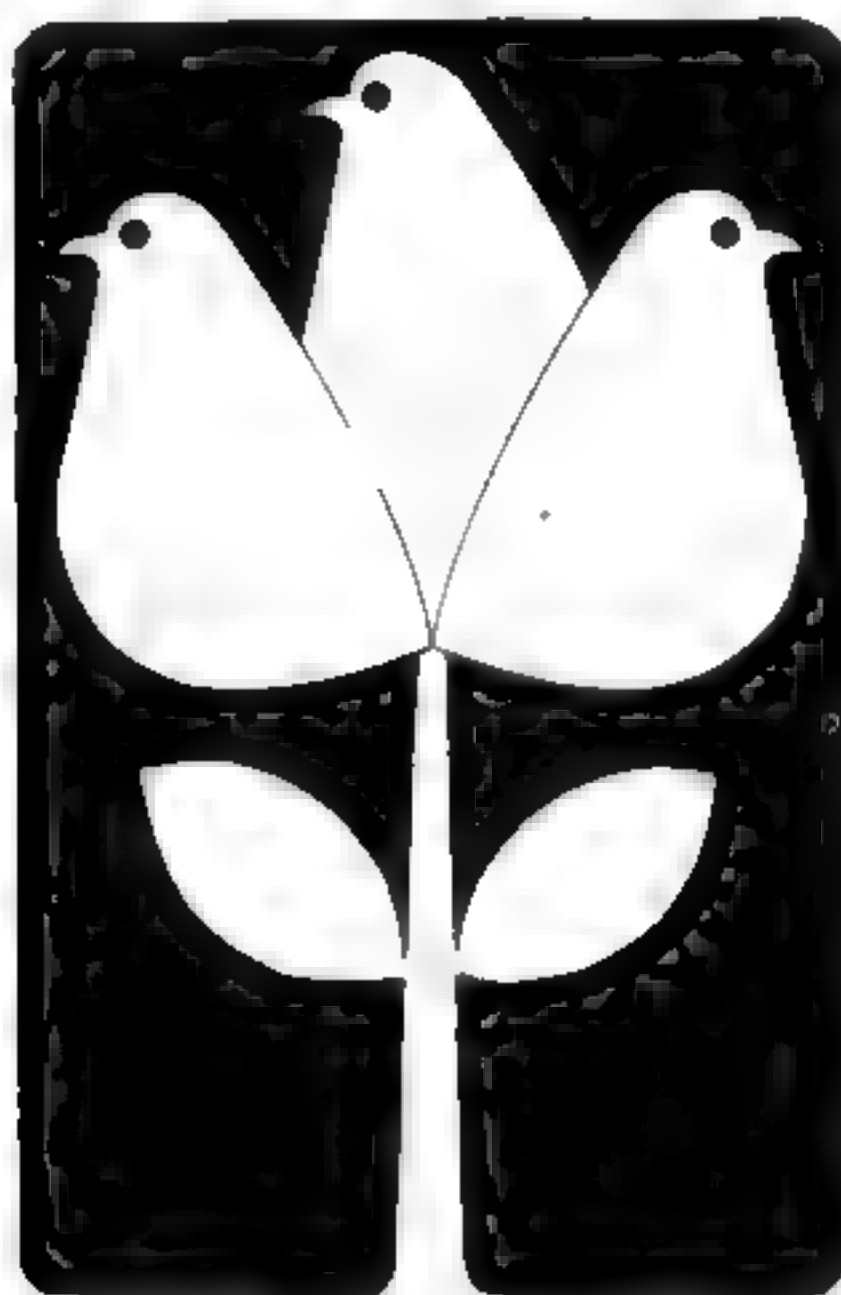
Deep in my heart I secretly nursed the hope of someday becoming a member of this heroic detachment. Imagine my joy and elation when I was told that I had been enlisted as one of the fighters of our militant party. I must confess, I was a bit doubtful whether I deserved to be among the honoured ranks of communists. I vowed on that day that I would study, work and fight in such a way as never to disgrace my party and comrades in arms, never betray their confidence and trust in me, work even harder to acquire those fine qualities demanded of all communists. Frankly it has not been easy and I know many tests still lie ahead. But as Lenin said "Communists do not fear difficulties"; they are tempered in the struggle to overcome them.

Some time ago I was granted the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union. Indeed it was a dream come true! I now had the chance to see with my own eyes what socialism was all about, to get to know and understand the courageous Soviet people. I was fortunate for I was there at a time when the Party and people celebrated an anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Watching the military parade, the faces of the young Red Army soldiers, stern and determined, the joyous shouts of hurrah! around me, the radiant and happy smiles and laughter of children, old men, women, my heart was filled with pride, respect and love for this heroic people. On that day my whole being throbbed with conviction that some day in our country our working people led by our party will also march as triumphant and proud, holding high the red banner like the Soviet people. In the Soviet Union I learnt not only what strength, endurance, courage, love for the motherland and true brotherhood and friendship meant, but also that the age-old problem of women's emancipation cannot be solved without socialism, that for the female personality to come out in full bloom, for her to employ and put to good use her intellectual and creative abilities, socialism is a must! Motherhood under this system is seen as a social function and not a chain of slavery. To think that had my mother been a Soviet citizen she would have received the high honour of "The Order of Mother's Glory" for having brought up eight children. Mothers are universally held in high honour in the Soviet Union. My visit to the land of Lenin served to kindle the fires of hatred for the Boer regime which denied us, the black people, and even to some extent the white people, the riches, the culture, the treasure mankind has amassed to date.

To conclude I want to say that for us women whose backs are bent under the burden of ages, whose yoke has not been made lighter by the tears of pain and sorrow we have shed, for us to straighten our backs, to plumb the fathomless spring of our creative minds, to march confidently and



majestically as proud and equal citizens into the bright and sunny future, we need the Communist Party, its theory and its programme to lead us. I invite all advanced women fighters in the ranks of the ANC and its fighting arm, all militant workers in the factories and farms, students, housewives, all who are ready and prepared to fight not only for a free and democratic South Africa, but also for the establishment of a socialist system in our country to join us. For such fighters the party has a place, for that is where you belong!



*Poster designed by the Cuban Movement for Peace and Sovereignty of Peoples to mark the 35th anniversary of the world peace movement.*

# SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM AND AMILCAR CABRAL

By Prof. Rostislav Ulyanovsky  
Dr. Sc. (Econ.)

Guinea-Bissau is a small country with scanty natural resources on the western coast of Africa. But it is widely known in the world owing to the dedicated armed struggle which its people waged against the Portuguese colonialists for more than a decade. At the head of this struggle stood the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), whose formation in 1956, according to its founder and leader Amilcar Cabral, was the most important event in the history of the Guinean people.

Amilcar Cabral was a leader of a liberation movement who had great prestige not only in PAIGC and among the population of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands, but also throughout Africa and in the world democratic movement. Yet, he had no personal ambitions and never claimed to be the mind and ideologue of the contemporary national liberation movement. His modesty was extraordinary and so was his dedication to the cause of freedom of the two countries and peoples sharing a common destiny. He realised that the overthrow of the colonial yoke depended above all on their allround efforts, their political, ideological and armed struggle, and that the organisation of this struggle called for a profound knowledge of the conditions of life, history and traditions of the people. At the same time the spirit of isolationism, national insularity, and disregard for the decisive role played by the solidarity of the progressive forces, and neglect of the international experience of revolutionary struggle were absolutely alien to him. He was sure that all the gains of advanced revolutionary thought and

practice should be taken into consideration in the course of the liberation struggle and creatively applied in concrete circumstances.

This alloy of broad-mindedness and a thorough knowledge of all aspects of life of his peoples made possible major successes in the work for socialist change in the liberated regions which were created in the course of the armed struggle against the colonialists, and in mobilising the population, and also ensured the genuine international recognition which was extended to PAIGC and its ideological platform. One can regard as a monument to Amilcar Cabral not only the two young republics (Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde) which now occupy a worthy place among Africa's progressive states, but also his great theoretical heritage which raises and solves on the basis of the experience of these two countries important socio-economic and political problems relevant to the development of states that have cast off colonial dependence.

Amilcar Cabral, the son of a Cape Verdean, was born in 1924 in Guinea-Bissau and spent almost his whole life there. It can be said that he personifies the idea of unity which the peoples of both countries are striving to attain. He was one of the few inhabitants of Guinea who was educated in Lisbon. There, together with other people who came from the Portuguese colonies, he founded the Centre of African Studies which combined scientific and educational activities with efforts to attain the political objective of uniting the budding forces of the liberation movement in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Returning home with a diploma of an engineer-agronomist he participated in taking the census of the rural population and thus gained a direct and profound knowledge of his country and its people. His report on the census is an excellent aid for studying Guinea's agrarian economy and social structure. Subsequently he used this report to analyse the concrete alignment of the class forces at different stages of the liberation movement.

### **In the Underground**

Meanwhile work was continuing on the formation of a revolutionary organisation in Guinea. Those African office workers who are opposed to colonialism drew Bissau workers into the clandestine National Independence Front (MING). PAIGC was founded in September 1956 with the active participation of Amilcar Cabral. This underground organisation whose aim was to fight for national liberation was built over a period of two years in the difficult conditions of a fascist colonial regime. In 1958 PAIGC intensified its activity mainly among the workers and urban employees,

resorting chiefly to such traditional methods of legal economic and political struggle as demonstrations and strikes. The shooting down of strikers in Pigihiti in August 1959 showed the PAIGC leadership that its tactics were inadequate and imperfect. Legal methods of struggle proved to be not only ineffective, but quite often made the leading cadres of fighters vulnerable targets of repressions.

In September 1959 PAIGC held a conference which adopted the historic decisions to mobilise the rural masses, prepare an armed struggle and to continue and widen its underground work in towns. It urged all ethnic groups and social sections to rally round PAIGC and decided to establish closer ties with the national liberation movements in Africa. The conference set the task of turning PAIGC into a battleworthy organisation which would work in all parts of the country. Party activists were sent to different regions with instructions to mobilise the population. The conference paid a great deal of attention to the problem of training the Party's political and technical cadres.

After the conference the Party began thorough preparations for an armed struggle against colonial domination. The Party leadership moved to Conakry where the training of cadres was also started. After a brief period of training the patriots were sent to Guinea-Bissau to organise the resistance movement.

Extensive armed operations began in 1963 and since then the history of the struggle waged by PAIGC has witnessed a succession of several trials, partial defeats and, eventually, mounting successes. Starting out with acts of sabotage and subversion which were followed by the nation-wide activity of partisan detachments, a formidable force of a truly people's war of liberation, PAIGC showed to the whole world that people who are determined to win and safeguard their freedom and preserve their dignity, could emerge victorious from an unequal struggle against a well prepared and trained army of the exploiters.

In 1964 PAIGC held its First Congress on the liberated territory. The Congress reorganised the Party, making it more democratic and effective. The country was partitioned into zones and regions and Party Committees were set up in all of them. The Congress emphasised the political nature of the armed struggle and the direct responsibility of the Party Committees for partisan activity, and decided to raise a regular insurgent army — the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces. This was a new stage in the struggle. The Congress urged the establishment of organs of people's rule, the normalisation of economic life, promotion of education and health protection in the liberated regions and the organisation of all-out political



work among the masses in order to acquaint them with the aims pursued by PAIGC, and mobilise them for the struggle against colonialism and to invigorate economic activity.

When the First Congress of PAIGC opened, armed resistance had already spread throughout the country. Alongside the southern front, where the struggle had initially begun, military operations were launched in the east and west. Patriots began to assault the fortified bases of the colonialists.

In many respects the successes of the liberation movement were due to the 1964 reforms. In 1964 and 1965 a new political and administrative structure based on the initiative of the population and leadership by PAIGC was introduced in the liberated regions. A new social system without inequality and exploitation, and founded on comradeship, mutual assistance, discipline, dedication and collective effort for the sake of the common cause was taking shape there. The enthusiasm and trust with which the masses responded to the socio-political transformations were PAIGC's gains that were just as important as its military victories. In the final analysis it was this trust and enthusiasm that predetermined the outcome of the war. Once they began to feel themselves the masters of their country, the people were no longer inclined to submit to the colonial yoke. The confidence which PAIGC won in the masses ensured its victory in the fight against splitter, pseudo-nationalistic organisations that disputed its right to represent the peoples of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. It was the support of the broad masses for PAIGC and its close ties with them that defeated the splitters and, after the fall of fascism in Portugal, deprived them of the possibility of seriously influencing the course of decolonisation. This was not the case in other countries where the activity of the splitters caused grave harm.

PAIGC multiplied its military victories with every passing year. By the end of 1972 it was in control of two thirds of the country with the colonialists remaining in control of only three towns — Bissau, Bafata and Bolama — and a number of military bases. The situation was such that PAIGC exercised sovereignty over the country, a part of which was occupied by a foreign power. In 1972, in order to bring the political superstructure into conformity with the actual state of affairs, PAIGC held elections to the National People's Assembly which was to proclaim the birth of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

### **Assassinated By Colonialist Hirelings**

Amilcar Cabral did not live to see Guinea-Bissau proclaimed a republic. He was treacherously assassinated in January 1973 by the hirelings of the

Portuguese colonialists. The death of the leader of the liberation movement was a great loss for PAIGC, for the peoples of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and for the whole of Africa which had awakened to a new life. But the crime committed by imperialist agents failed to attain its main objective; it did not precipitate a crisis in PAIGC, did not lead to internal dissent and did not prevent the patriotic forces from continuing their operations. As though anticipating his tragic death, Amilcar Cabral once said that a person could not regard that he had fulfilled his cause if no one would carry it on after his death. He left behind hundreds and even thousands of true followers united in PAIGC and welded morally and politically by a long and difficult struggle.

After a short interval in its activities caused by the death of its leader, the liberation movement developed with fresh force. In September 1973 the country's first ever National People's Assembly proclaimed the formation of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. It was absolutely clear that the inevitable rout of the Portuguese colonialists in Guinea was just round the corner. The collapse of fascism in Portugal merely accelerated the course of events and enabled PAIGC by means of negotiations to consolidate its recognition as the sole and legitimate representative of the peoples of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. The Party achieved this at the cost of many years of selfless struggle for freedom, independence and social progress.

The leaders of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of Cape Verde repeatedly said that in their policy they will be guided by Amilcar Cabral's ideas. The Third Congress of PAIGC which was held in November 1977 reaffirmed the party's fidelity to the principles and theoretical heritage of its founder and recognised leader.

The national liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau developed in conditions of backwardness that was extreme even for the countries of Tropical Africa. In these circumstances the political vanguard had to be fully trained for the task of mobilising the people and promoting their knowledge of the aims and methods of struggle. The Party had to be dedicated and selfless, close to the people, know their life and feelings; it had to be a capable organiser and propagandist whose words matched its deeds.

What enabled PAIGC to fulfil this role with honour was largely the precise ideological and political instructions it received from Amilcar Cabral, his great attention to political work and thorough theoretical grounding and foresight, his searching analysis of the general laws of the revolutionary process and ability to direct it towards the attainment of one specific aim or another. He regarded theory as a component part of revolutionary activity, an important means not only of recognising but also of transforming the

world. Amílcar Cabral was a principled opponent of a voluntaristic, empirical and pragmatic approach to the national liberation movement.

At the very beginning of the 1960s when one African country after another acquired independence (1960 was proclaimed Africa year) and many people began to think that prospects for consistent decolonisation were more favourable than ever before, Amílcar Cabral started to speak about a crisis that had gripped the African revolution. "It seems to us," he said at the Third Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference in Cairo in March 1961, "that this is not a crisis of growth, but, chiefly, a crisis of consciousness. In many cases the practice of the liberation struggle and its future prospects have no theoretical basis and are also out of contact with reality to one degree or another. Local experience and the experience of other countries accumulated during the struggle for national independence, the consolidation of national unity and the building of foundations for progress have been or still are forgotten."<sup>1</sup>

According to him the successful development of the anti-imperialist struggle depended on a concrete knowledge of the actual state of affairs in every country and Africa as a whole, and also the experience of other peoples and the formulation of science-based strategic principles.

In Amílcar Cabral's opinion the essence of the crisis of the African liberation movement was that in many countries it had not followed the revolutionary path and that the aspirations of the masses were thwarted by illusory independence which concealed new forms of neocolonialist exploitation. His ideal was the transformation of the national liberation movement into a revolution which would resolutely and fully liquidate all forms of imperialist oppression and also abolish inequality and exploitation sprouting on local soil.

### **Capitalism Breeds Colonialism**

In defining the nature of colonialism and imperialism and setting the corresponding national liberation tasks, Amílcar Cabral, like all the finest representatives of the anti-imperialist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, proceeded from the experience accumulated in Africa. He did not reduce colonialism to political dependence on the parent countries and, of course, did not think that the epoch of colonialism would recede into the past after the formal termination of this dependence and the acquisition of the outward features of sovereignty by the colonial peoples. Like many other fighters for true independence, Amílcar Cabral followed Lenin's teaching that imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism. He looked upon colonialism

as a natural product of the capitalist economy, a result of the policy of state-monopoly capitalism and the striving of the super-monopolies for regular and high profits. Hence the conclusion: so long as the capitalist system of economy exists, its expansion into the backward countries continues and only the forms of exploitation change. From classical colonialism the industrialised capitalist countries turn to neocolonialism.

Amilcar Cabral studied the forms of neocolonialist exploitation and emphasised that imperialism's strategic objective in the new conditions was to use "assistance" to the former colonies as a means of creating a pseudo-bourgeoisie there and thus slow down the revolution and increase the potential of the bourgeoisie as a force that neutralises the revolution.<sup>2</sup> In other words, in an era when direct political diktat becomes impossible, imperialism's objective in the developing countries is to abet the local exploiting elements which, in contraposition to the revolutionary path, pursue a policy of national reformism and conciliation with international capital. That is why Amilcar Cabral regarded the anti-colonial movement as a means of emancipating the national productive forces from every direct or indirect exploitation. He stressed in particular that the main aspect of the national liberation struggle was the struggle against neocolonialism.<sup>3</sup>

He preferred not to talk about socialism, believing that this slogan was premature for the historical stage through which his country was passing. But he admitted that the aims which the Guinean revolutionaries had set themselves were similar to those advanced by the political vanguard of the working class in the industrialised countries. In doing so he proceeded from his scientific approach to history, and not from concepts about the exclusiveness of the historical development of the peoples of Asia and Africa and the stability and the age-old socialist nature of their traditional mode of life. He shared historical materialism's concepts of mankind's development from the primitive communal system through the slaveowning, feudal and bourgeois formations to socialism and communism, and supported the Marxist conclusion that in our epoch the general progress of mankind has offered the backward peoples a unique opportunity to bypass capitalism. He singled out two factors enabling the African and Asian countries to move towards socialism without going through the stage of developed capitalism: 1) the enormous capacity of technical means for mastering nature and 2) the rise of the socialist states which have radically changed the face of the world and the historical process.

Amilcar Cabral was certain that the peoples of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde and in general, all the peoples of Africa, had no other prospects



for progress, freedom and prosperity than socialism. In the final analysis he focussed his entire theoretical and practical activity on the sole objective, that of transforming the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle into a socialist revolution with due consideration for the absence of direct economic, social, political, material and spiritual prerequisites for socialism in his country. Therein lies his great theoretical contribution. He understood the profoundly contradictory nature of the development of the former colonies, knew how to combine loyalty to the socialist ideal with the realisation that the revolution had to pass through intermediate stages and planned them in such a way that they became a means leading to the attainment of the ultimate aim, and not an obstacle to it.

What gave Amilcar Cabral the key to the solution of this problem was that he combined a deep knowledge of the laws of historical development and the concrete realities of Africa, particularly of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde where he conducted his political activity.

He made truly scientific political analysis of the social structure of these two countries. Amilcar Cabral was convinced that all the patriotic forces of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde had to act together in order to repulse Portuguese colonialism and imperialism in general. In view of the not too pronounced class differentiation, this alliance, in his opinion, should embrace all social sections, almost the entire population of these countries. And so PAIGC put forward the slogan "Unity and Struggle". At the same time he thought it necessary to study the economic position of all social groups with the thoroughness of a researcher, and to try and find in it an explanation for the political behaviour while realising that it cannot be the same at all the different stages of the revolution. The economic foundation, the state of affairs in the field of material production and the revolutionary process which passes through two stages — the struggle for independence and the struggle for the abolition of exploitation — are the two points of departure for Cabral's attitude to various social sections.<sup>4</sup>

His analysis is particularly interesting because it brings to light the specific features of the social structure and revolutionary strategy in the most backward colonies and dependencies. He repudiates some concepts which appeared in the developing countries as excessive overestimation of national features, and adopts a stand which in the main coincides with scientific socialism.

### **Role of the Peasantry**

In the first place this applies to his definition of the revolutionary

potentialities of the peasantry and the working class. Amilcar Cabral did not accept Fanon's idea that the peasantry was the principal revolutionary force in the colonial world and insisted that it was necessary to draw a clear line between a physical force and a revolutionary force.<sup>5</sup> He knew better than anyone else that it was the peasantry that provided the bulk of the manpower of the armed resistance against the colonialists, and that without its involvement into the struggle the overthrow of the colonial yoke was inconceivable. Nevertheless, unlike Fanon he did not idealise the peasantry; he realised that its backwardness handicapped the spread of national and socio-political awareness and knew that at times it was extremely difficult to mobilise the peasants for the struggle.

Amilcar Cabral was certain that the status of the peasantry inhibited its understanding of the revolutionary vistas and that in order to revolutionise it there had to be a ferment in the form of leadership by people from towns who were the vehicles of progressive ideology. As usual, without claiming to speak for the whole world, Cabral maintained that as far as his country was concerned, Fanon's assertion that the peasantry was the main revolutionary force and was in effect a colonial proletariat was incorrect. This conclusion is definitely of methodological significance. It is particularly important and symbolic because it was formulated by a revolutionary, a theoretician and a practical worker of a purely peasant country who confirmed the correctness of his view by the successes of the revolutionary movement.

Refusing to idealise the peasantry Cabral also rejected Fanon's nihilistic attitude to "embryonic proletariat" which has allegedly become an appendage of the colonial system and profited from it. Having stated that the colonial proletariat was weak, Fanon ceased to regard it as a revolutionary force. Cabral, on the other hand, set the task of enhancing the awareness of the working class taking into account that it has a special historical mission to perform. Whatever the level of its political awareness (given a certain minimum i.e., the realisation of its own class needs), he said, the working class is a true people's vanguard of the national liberation struggle in neocolonialist conditions.<sup>6</sup> At the same time he called upon the working class to unite closely with other exploited sections — the peasantry and the national petty bourgeoisie.

The latter has a special role to play in view of the weakness of the working class. It should have, in Cabral's opinion, endeavoured to offset the inadequate experience and revolutionary activity of the working class and assume the mission of an "idea proletariat". He thought that the revolutionary part of the petty bourgeoisie (in addition to this part he

distinguished conciliatory and vacillating elements in the petty-bourgeois milieu) could play this role and fuse its interests with that of the workers and peasants. Yet he did not ignore its inherent proneness to turn bourgeois and was aware that the petty-bourgeois revolutionaries' road to socialism was difficult and contradictory. Seeing that there was no other choice at the current phase, Amilcar Cabral realised that this specific inevitability (leadership by petty-bourgeois groups) was one of the weaknesses of the national liberation movement.<sup>7</sup>

This weakness, just as the shortage of socio-economic and political prerequisites in general, in Cabral's opinion, was to have been compensated by enhanced ideological, political and organisational activity. His exceptionally great attention to this work was one of the most salient features of his activity as leader of PAIGC. He never failed to emphasise the political character of all the problems that were being solved in the course of national liberation, and, in the first place, such a question as armed struggle. The combination of military actions with clearly-formulated long-term targets and ideological and political training enabled the patriots of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde to score a complete victory and made it possible for these two countries to advance along the road of social progress.

Amilcar Cabral never called himself an adherent of scientific socialism or Marxism-Leninism. Fidelity to the socialist ideal is far from always determined by declarations. In his theoretical and practical activity he adhered to the principles of scientific socialism, and his entire life that was wholly dedicated to the struggle for the happiness of his small nation, was undoubtedly influenced by Marxism-Leninism.

"Irrespective of whether you are a Marxist, whether you are a Leninist, it is difficult not to recognise the correctness and even greatness of Lenin's analysis and conclusions," he said. "They are of historical significance because they illumined with a living light the extremely thorny.. path of the peoples fighting for complete liberation from imperialist domination."<sup>8</sup>

Amilcar Cabral's life and activity vividly demonstrate the beneficial influence of the ideas of scientific socialism on the national liberation movement. They show that the future belongs to those fighters from among the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America who honestly and consistently link the national liberation movement with socialism.

### **International Contacts**

After 1963 I often met Amilcar Cabral at international forums, conferences and seminars arranged by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation

(AAPSO) in different countries of the two continents. It was a period of a far-flung armed struggle of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies, a period when the national liberation war against the colonialists was at its height. And Amilcar Cabral devoted his heart, his thoughts and rare abilities to this struggle.

He often visited the USSR where he was always welcome and where he established very friendly relations with mass Soviet organisations, particularly with the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. He also had cordial relations with the CPSU which he deeply respected and to whose voice he was profoundly attentive. On many occasions, both among his Soviet friends and in his utterances abroad, he expressed deep gratitude to the Soviet people for their assistance to his small and heroic nation which fought over 10 years against Portuguese colonialists who had the backing of imperialist NATO countries.

One only had to see his boundless confidence in the victory of his people and hear him speak about his dreams that after victory over the colonialists, he, being an agronomist, would immerse himself in work to reorganise the village and educate the peasants. He shook them out of their slumber and made them aware that they had to fight far beyond the tropical jungles of Western Africa. And thousands of peasants and deprived citizens of Guinean towns joined the liberation army which was under his command because that was what his people wanted.

Amilcar Cabral invited his Soviet friends to visit the future victorious Guinea and promised to show them its beautiful landscapes, the industriousness and hospitality of its people and their customs, their generosity and cordiality. He did not live to see the victory which he passionately desired and for the sake of which he lived and worked.

By writing this essay I wanted to express my feelings for this outstanding man, this unbending fighter. It was a need which I have been experiencing for a long time. Amilcar Cabral was advancing towards scientific socialism and he would have attained it fully, without reservation if his life had not been cut short by a bullet fired by a secret service agent of the Portuguese colonialists. In the Pantheon dedicated to fighters who gave their lives for national liberation and social emancipation there is the figure of Amilcar Cabral, a man with the head of a thinker and the heart of an ardent revolutionary fully convinced in the one and only truth in the world, in the justice of socialism.



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# **AFRICA NOTES** **AND COMMENT**

By Du Bois

## **CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE): All for the People, Only for the People**

August 15, 1963 is an historic day for the Congolese people and their revolution. It marked the overthrow of Fulbert Youlou after prolonged popular struggles culminating in three days of mass demonstrations, protest and civil unrest by the workers, the unemployed, youth and students and progressive forces led by the trade unions. This marked the beginning of the end of classical French neo-colonial rule. It ushered in a phase of prolonged struggle between the revolutionary forces and those still bent on furthering the interests of French imperialism in that part of the world for their personal and narrow class interests.

This period also witnessed an acute struggle between ultra-left elements and the progressive forces within the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) formed in the wake of the 1963 uprising as the sole political organisation with a declared policy of non-capitalist development. Almost five years later, during August and September, 1968, the increasingly anti-democratic and unpopular elements within the government were removed from power by a united front of left, progressive elements within the armed forces and the civilian population. Marien Ngouabi, then Commander-in-Chief of the army, became head of state, and a new revolutionary authority, the National Council of the Revolution, was created to exercise political power.

The following year saw the establishment of the Congolese Party of Labour (CLP) as the main organisational instrument of the revolution. The goals of the CLP were clearly spelt out: a socialist-oriented path of

development based on the principles of scientific socialism; the creation of a society which would not tolerate the exploitation of man by man and in which popular democracy was to be the bedrock of power. The slogan advanced by the new Party was: All for the People, Only for the People.

The declaration of intent to restructure society in a radical way was premised on a number of key issues: the planning of a national economy and the harnessing of both human endeavour and material resources not only to meet the needs of the people but also to generate a surplus which could be transformed into development capital for further enhancement of society; the involvement of the mass of peasants, workers, women, youth, students, the intelligentsia and other social and class forces in meaningful participation in the development process; and the creation of appropriate organisations and structures to release the creative energies and enthusiasm of the people.

At the same time, other important questions had to be posed and solutions found in the political process: how to counter the manifold problems of neo-colonialism and the transnational corporations; to what extent must reliance be placed on foreign capital and how to minimise the impact and influence of the latter within the national economy. In the sphere of politics the revolutionary forces had to strike the correct balance between the people, the party and the state. Most importantly, the revolution had to be safeguarded from reactionary forces which had ensconced themselves within the process, biding their time and circumstances to strike a blow for counter-revolution.

### **Political Struggle**

Even as the young revolution was taking its initial steps to consolidate and sustain itself, counter-revolution struck. On March 18, 1977, Marien Ngouabi was assassinated. For the next two years both rightwing and ultra-left forces attempted to divert the course of the Congolese revolution from its declared 1968 positions. Although no overt attempts were made to renounce this course the politics of these forces made its anti-people character clear — the Constitution was abrogated, most of the leading organisations of the people were dissolved or emasculated of their progressive content. The CLP's role as the "engine of the revolution" was allowed to diminish to a paper role only. The organs of state administration were seized by an element — loosely classed, the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" — whose sole concern was to line its own pockets from state coffers. Corruption became widespread. The masses became objects of decrees and state rule completely divorced from their basic needs and aspirations. Such was the character of the counter-revolution.

The ultimate aim of destroying the revolutionary process, however, was defeated. The CLP, the Congolese Trade Union Confederation, the Union of Congolese Socialist Youth and other patriotic organisations rallied the masses of the people. The intensity and scope of mass pressure and demonstrations forced through an extraordinary plenary of the Central Committee of the CLP, which had deliberately not been convened during the reign of the counter-revolution.

The result was the defeat of those elements hostile to the 1968 policies. Colonel Dennis Sassou N'Guesso, who was charged with the special responsibility of presiding over a special committee to prepare for the CLP's Third Congress, assumed at the same time the functions of Head of State. Analysing the reasons for the counter-revolution the Third Congress came to the conclusion that the Party had not paid sufficient attention to the various class and social forces in the country, government and party, and had not assessed the power relations within them. From this the Congress concluded that the Party had as a result been unable to unify all those forces who were for the revolutionary path and isolate those who formed the social base of reaction. The Congress also came to the conclusion that internal reaction had relied on external forces hostile to the Congolese revolution:

"If our country has been transformed from a colony into a neo-colony it is because foreign domination has established a social base in it. And the bureaucratic bourgeoisie serves as the support for that base..."

To counter this the CC report to the Congress stressed that it was absolutely essential that the links between the party, workers, peasants and organs of the state be secured. Moreover, the Party had to be strengthened in order to play its vanguard role and shed all those elements which had proved to be unreliable, self-interested and careerist.

The Third Congress report went further. It analysed at length the social and material conditions within the People's Republic. It pointed out the manifold weaknesses in the economy and the still unresolved problems:

"We have not managed to take over the main means of production and master the management of our state enterprises, which is why we cannot play a decisive role in the distribution of the products of labour".

The nature of the economic process was still reliant on outmoded methods of production in the main sector — agriculture — and on the manifold strata of petty production on an individual basis.

This was the situation after the crisis year of 1977-1979 and the convening of the Extraordinary Congress in March, 1979.

What has been the experience of the Congolese revolution since then? An illuminating interview conducted by the journal *World Marxist Review* (No 9,





September, 1983) with a member of the Political Bureau of the CLP provides some insight into the problems and perspectives of the Congo's road to socialism.

### **National Resources**

The Congo is a relatively small country with a population of less than two million people, almost 60% of whom are dependent on farming and other agricultural activity for their main livelihood. Nearly half the country's total surface is covered by forests, and timber-related exports are among the country's chief earners. Many minerals are to be found in the country — lead, tin, zinc, copper, iron ore, phosphate and bauxite — and these contribute to its economic resources, though their production is relatively less developed. The main economic resource in terms of natural deposits, however, is oil. Since the discovery of new deposits in 1980 this commodity makes up almost 70% of the state budget. Export crops have been developed to some extent, including cocoa, coffee, groundnuts, sugar cane, tobacco and palm oil.

Some of the main directions of economic policy contained in the Five Year Plan for 1982-1986 aim at building and extending the infrastructural facilities — transport, communications, localised industrial and other pre-requisites such as schools, hospitals, medical, cultural and other institutions. By far the major emphasis is placed on the development of the state sector of the economy: "We have always believed that socialism cannot be built without a strong and flourishing state sector." To this end nearly one-third of the funds allocated by the state will be used to improve state enterprise. In order to weld workers, management, the party and the state into a closely-knit cooperative at such enterprises, the "definitive triangle" rule has been adopted. That is, management, the workers' collectives, the party representative and state jointly participate in the decision and management process in such enterprises and collectively assess progress, problems and failures and successes.

In political terms the current phase of the revolution can best be characterised as a national democratic revolution. Its fundamental aim is to carry out all measures which will benefit the working people wherever they are. Hence the popular character of the revolution. In this phase, the Party relies on its analysis and practical experience of class alliance the main task of which is to rally all the democratic and anti-imperialist forces together towards commonly defined objectives. In such an alliance we find the working people in town and countryside, the peasantry (the largest section

of Congolese society), the middle strata (lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.) and those sections of the national bourgeoisie (operating mainly in the agrarian sector, building and small trades) whose interests are opposed to those of imperialism at this stage. In such an alliance of social and class forces there is, however, no place for the compradore bourgeoisie, whose interests lie in an alliance with international finance-capital against those of the masses. Such an alliance of forces can only have meaning if they are drawn in to the process of decision and policy-making in a meaningful way, and not treated as mere "objects" of the revolution. How is this accomplished in practice?

The Party and state strive through the organs and organisations of the people to involve them in all formulations concerning economic and social plans. This task is very complicated and much still needs to be done. The system of representation now relies on the elective process. The representatives of the party, mass organisations (such as the trade unions etc.) and peasants are elected on to the district councils, regional councils and the National People's Assembly. In such a situation individuals regarded as part of the national bourgeoisie can be represented on the various councils if they are so nominated for their work by the people.

What of the role and position of the CLP — vanguard party of the revolution? The 13 years of the party's existence and work have led to the position that "... one can safely say that the idea of a leading party is not only accessible to the masses but is accepted by them and has struck deep roots among the people. In our country, the party has become a living and tangible reality...". What attracts people to the vanguard party is that it is inalienably associated in their minds with the ideas of *social justice*. Only when this aspect of the party's function is lost sight of will the mass of the people reject it. Thus party cadres, leaders and party functionaries must not be allowed to use their posts for self-seeking ends, and there should be no gap between the earnings of responsible functionaries and other categories of the working people. It is because the party has been seen to stand for and fight for social justice that its popularity has increased. The party has, since the 1979 Congress, taken political and practical measures to ensure that its ranks are not penetrated by opportunist elements by careful consideration of all candidates' activities in the mass organisations and by imposing a two-year probationary period.

It is the advances made over the last few years which led President Sassou N'Guesso to say of the Congolese revolution:

"We have demonstrated to the entire world the vibrant forces of the revolution, which, despite the repeated blows of imperialism, is advancing towards the realisation of the tasks of the national, democratic and people's revolution with a view to subsequently building socialism in the heart of Central Africa."

## **ANGOLA: Historic Congress of Angolan Workers**

Between April 11-16, 1984 the First Congress of the National Union of Angolan Workers (UNTA) took place in Luanda, Angola. This historic gathering of workers' representatives was preceded by intensive work throughout the country where workers in one or other industry or enterprise were to be found. In the event, some 673 delegates from 18 provinces attended the Congress together with 60 delegates from the international trade union movement. The papers that were prepared, discussed and adopted by the Congress reflected the wide-ranging and multi-faceted tasks and activities of Angolan workers. These ranged from: the role and tasks of the unions in the improvement of social and living conditions of Angolan workers, UNTA's Duties in worker education, workers' participation in the management of economy and production, conditions of working women and other documents related to trade unionism in Angola.

Pascoal Luvualu, Secretary-General of UNTA, revealed the scope and involvement of Angolan workers in the building of the Angolan economy on socialist-oriented lines. Nearly 80% of all workers in industry were working in state-owned or controlled enterprises and they were responsible for the production of a wide range of products — sugar, paper, steel rods, wheat, maize, flour, pasta, biscuits, plywood and motor vehicle assembly etc. This in itself reflected the extent of ownership and control which the State exercised over the nation's material resources for the benefit of the working people: 97% in textile production, 85% in beer, 67% in matches, 58% in cement, 91% in glass-making and 56% in tyre production. At the same time, Luvualu pointed out the significant control the State exercised in the oil, diamonds, building, fisheries, electricity production and supply and ship repair industries. State and cooperative sectors of the agricultural sector of the economy were also being expanded.

Where formerly these and many other of the national resources of Angola were the preserves for profit of private individuals, companies and the transnational corporations, today the Angolan Party (MPLA Workers' Party), government and working people can take just pride in their control and ownership of the economy for the benefit of all working people.

It was for this reason that the first congress of UNTA was both historic and a necessity of the revolutionary process in Angola. Although each had a distinctive role and function within the revolutionary process, party, state and workers' and other mass movements of the people were indissolubly

bound by a common necessity and a common objective — the building of a socialist Angola.

Luvualu pointed out that this link arose out of the historic necessity of the independence struggle from Portuguese colonialism. The formation of the Angolan trade unions was an extension of the anti-colonial struggle led by the MPLA as well as the need to fight against the economic exploitation, harsh working and living conditions and poor wages paid to Angolan workers by the capitalists, local and foreign. Luvualu reminded delegates of the historic role played by the trade unions in mobilising the working people for the economic and political struggle against the colonisers and later against imperialism which, using the South African racists, wanted to destroy the MPLA and subvert the Angolan revolution from the path to which its great leader, Agostinho Neto, and the founding fathers of the MPLA had pointed. Thus the history of the workers' struggles and the trade union movement is closely linked to the struggle of the people for national liberation.

In his closing speech to the Congress President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos reaffirmed this and went further. During the independence struggle against UNITA, FNLA and the South African racists, he said, the workers had to fight for the consolidation of the revolution and its victory with gun in hand as well as the tools necessary to keep the economy going.

“At that time, Angolan workers in the mines, factories, countryside and public services had to mobilise to defend every production centre, every workplace, every inch of our land.”

President Dos Santos also reminded delegates of the misconceived ideas which the counter-revolution in Angola tried to implant in the minds of workers — ideas whose main aim was to drive a wedge between the workers, their organisations and the Party and government. This attempt failed and there emerged a greater clarity of the role of trade unions in a society in transition to socialism.

The first congress discussed and adopted the constitution of UNTA and its various roles and structures. Congress also adopted the Programme of Action and guidelines for the future activities of the trade union movement. These included: the fight to increase production and productivity, the review and adoption of wages and salaries to workers in accordance with the nature of the work done, the struggle against speculation, the black market (parallel economy), the fight to increase the living standards and cultural well-being of the Angolan workers and people and the strengthening of the country's defence capability. This latter task, central to consolidating the Angolan



revolution against South African aggression, the counter-revolutionary UNITA and the forces of international imperialism, formed the twin theme of the congress — defence and production.

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## **LESOTHO: Save Lesotho Campaign**

Recently, the World Peace Council and the Lesotho Peace and Solidarity Committee initiated the Save Lesotho Campaign. The aim is to mobilise world public opinion and action in defence of the independence and national sovereignty of Lesotho. Like all other frontline states of southern Africa Lesotho has been the target of aggression and destabilisation by the racist South African state.

World public opinion was outraged when a commando of South Africa's racist troops invaded Lesotho in December 1982 and massacred 42 people. The pretext then, as it is now, is that the Lesotho government was "harbouring ANC terrorists" and that Lesotho served as "a centre of subversion against South Africa". As it turned out, those who were killed in the Maseru massacre were unarmed men, women and children, refugees from the white supremacist, terrorist state. A number of Lesotho nationals were also among those murdered.

The horror of the occasion alerted the world to the real nature of Pretoria's war of aggression against the peoples and governments of the frontline states. Yet this undeclared war had been going on for some time before, in many ways and forms. It required a massacre of the proportions of Maseru to kindle interest in the plight of black states held virtual hostages to Pretoria's military acts of intervention and destabilisation.

The Botha-Malan war against Lesotho is designed to put an end to Lesotho's principled contribution to the national liberation struggle of the South African black majority. In this, Lesotho has taken the position of all African states, expressed through innumerable resolutions of the OAU, to support the inalienable right of the South African people to national self-determination and freedom from white supremacy rule. It has granted refuge to South Africans who have been victims, in one form or another, of the vicious system of race-class rule. To date, some 11,000 South Africans have been registered with the local representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Pretoria militarists see in such people potential "ANC terrorists". The Maseru massacre virtually forced the Lesotho

government to request of the ANC that a number of its members quit the country. They had been engaged in open, public work, as in many other parts of the world where the ANC has established an office or presence, but in the eyes of the racists they represented a threat to South Africa's security.

Lesotho is a tiny country of no more than 1.5 million people. The country is completely surrounded by South Africa — an island hostage of the white supremacist state. Its colonial past as a British Protectorate left it economically dependent on South Africa. Almost all of Lesotho's imports have to come through South African ports and on South African roads and railways. Very few industries have developed to provide work for the people as a whole and it is estimated that some 100,000 workers from Lesotho are engaged as contract labourers in South Africa, mainly on the mines.

The pressure that a powerful state can bring to bear on a country like Lesotho is obvious. The South Africans have not refused to exert this pressure. Apart from the 1982 invasion there have been innumerable threats and actions against the government and people of Lesotho. Border incidents between South African forces and Lesotho's tiny National Guard have been provoked as pretexts for repeated incursions into the country. South Africa has threatened to choke Lesotho's economic life blood. Bandits have been trained, armed and paid to assassinate leading public figures. Military acts of aggression have been stepped up through the funding, arming and training of so-called national liberation forces in the country. Pretoria has voiced its outright condemnation of the Lesotho government's exercise of its right as a sovereign state to establish diplomatic links with the governments of the Soviet Union, China and the Democratic Republic of Korea. Pretoria's paranoia has transformed these acts into attempts at "communist subversion".

More recently, Pretoria has openly financed a new opposition within Lesotho — the Basotho Democratic Alliance. The Alliance, it has been reported, was actually formed in South Africa in January this year. Some six Lesotho politicians were present with Pik Botha, South Africa's Foreign Minister, together with the chief of the racists' security police.

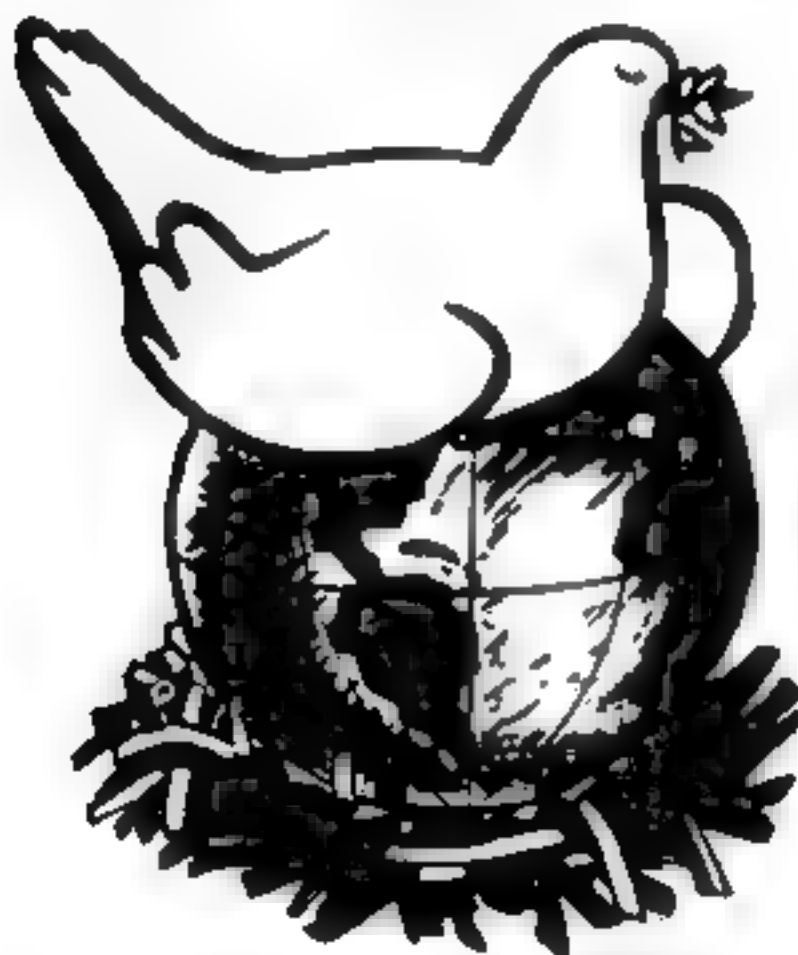
In the light of this we may reasonably ask: who is posing a threat to whose security and independence?

Since the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique the threat to the security and independence of states like Lesotho has increased. The racist regime is more than ever determined to enforce a *Pax Pretoriana* over the entire southern African region. Lesotho, like Botswana, has been repeatedly bombarded by the Pretoria racists to sign a so-called "Pact of

Non-Aggression". Such a pact, Lesotho has argued, will only act to destroy the country's independence. It would provide the racists with a pretext for intervention and interference in the internal affairs of Lesotho on the grounds that the basis of the "Pact" had been violated.

It is the duty and responsibility of progressive governments, organisations and people's movements the world over to come to the assistance of Lesotho and the other independent states of southern Africa, to resist the total onslaught of the racist-fascist South African regime and imperialism. To take the path of appeasement and accommodation would be an absolute disaster for the peoples of the region.

## NICARAGUA



*From a poster designed by the Nicaraguan Peace Committee.*

# **EULOGY TO DR. YUSUF DADOO**

## **National Chairman, South African Communist Party**

the black star loomed larger  
over the smiling new world  
of Mota's vision of a sun  
that embraced light in eternal love  
from the soviet union to angola  
from hanoi to cuba  
and flirted with a galaxy of stars  
stars that never set  
stars that shone amidst  
the darkness that sought to overpower  
history in labour  
the midwife was and is vladimir lenin  
he operated in the 1917 theatre  
Mota was to dream the dream  
dreamt and realised  
peacefully he reflected with no regrets  
in whittington hospital running  
parallel to marx' highgate grave

war-drum thudding in his heart  
history swallowed illusions  
and life vomited death  
head held high nodding  
to the heritage of lenin's land

Mota defied the worst moment  
life in the mould of the west  
will be cut short as the thunderous  
steps of continents on the march  
leave a trail in the book of time  
Mota defied the worst moment  
and like the immortal Mota he was  
Doc grasped the fleeting moment  
and transformed it into a message  
that like a melodious song  
will be a chorus throughout generations

a dream was realised in his life  
so larger than life  
'Let no quarter be given  
We must fight to the bitter end'!  
words uttered from lips  
that always sucked peace from a pipe  
lips that cursed and condemned  
all pipe-dreams

as the black star loomed larger  
over the smiling new world

from the pipe smoked by Gaika  
Doc exhaled the smoke that  
came back as a flame  
last seen in Dingane's eyes  
'No one has the right to opt out'  
the silent storm thundered

yonder faster and higher  
you whose head is plumed  
with feathers of a rare bird  
yonder faster and higher  
Isithwalandwe Seaparankoe

as the black star looms larger  
over the smiling new world



the wind of capital  
failed to rock your proletarian ship  
the dust of racism failed to blur  
your internationalist vision  
the dust of racism failed to litter  
Dadoo's majestic stature soaring over  
rainbow colours so united in their diversity  
so far-flung in the universe  
so close in time  
and all continents are running in unison

and the black star loomed larger  
over the smiling new world

the message of the poor  
rich with their experience  
hardened by their hands  
obedient to their intimate needs  
Dadoo pledged eternal obedience  
to their cause

and the black star loomed larger  
over the smiling new world

I did not wait for the  
celebration of your life  
to commit memory to paper  
nor had any premonition  
to invite you in life for  
a walk into the richness of your life  
accept Mota the last farewell  
from those whose journey has just begun  
aha! there is victory in this defeat  
as the black star looms larger  
over the smiling new world

*Tau ya Mogale*

# THE DANGERS OF "LEGAL MARXISM" IN SOUTH AFRICA

by Ruth Nhere

The current phase of the South African revolution is characterised by a rich variety of methods of struggle. The volume of 'legal' political work has increased dramatically. The new conditions have galvanised the radical intelligentsia into action, and there is literally a flood of publications being produced all over the country. While some of these writings are so 'academic' as to appear irrelevant to political reality, many are influencing sections of the mass movement, raising a number of theoretical issues. Some 'down to earth activists' shy away from entering into these debates, pointing to the broad sweep of mass actions as more deserving of their attention. However, it is important that the ideological battlefield should not be surrendered by default.

Lenin warned against those who declare that "every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes", pointing out that "to repeat these words in a period of theoretical disorder is like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns of the day."<sup>1</sup> The degree of 'legal' work taking place in a revolutionary process depends both on the strength of the revolutionary forces and on the specific tactics being employed by the enemy. South Africa is not unique in this. In fact, in certain respects we face a situation similar to that which confronted Lenin and his comrades in the Russia of the 1890s.

In Russia, the spread of Marxism was encompassing significant numbers of the intelligentsia. In 1894/5, in addition to illegal literature, a number of legal Marxist works began to be published. Censorship and the repressive nature of the state meant that these works had to be couched in indirect and metaphorical terms, which Lenin referred to as 'Aesopian language'. This period of the 'legal Marxists' in Russia holds some important lessons for us today.

Lenin utilised the facilities provided by the legally existing publications to publish some of his own writings. He also entered into a tactical alliance with the 'legal Marxists' against the Narodniks who denied the revolutionary role of the proletariat. But most important, Lenin exposed those trends in 'legal Marxism' which furthered the interests of the bourgeoisie.

It was in the works of the 'legal Marxists' that the first tendencies towards revisionism were discernible. Marxist terminology was used to construct an argument in defence of the free development of capitalism. Lenin showed how necessary it was to expose this tendency. But he also warned of the difficulties involved in coming to grips with this type of analysis and advancing a clear critique against it.

Some of the more academic writings now emanating from the intelligentsia in South Africa remind us of Lenin's comment that "Not to see the wood for the trees is the main feature of the petty-bourgeois doctrine".<sup>2</sup>

### **Workerist Economism**

The great strides made by the independent trade union movement in South Africa since 1973 are correctly heralded as of major significance to the revolutionary struggle. There are, however, important differences of view as to the role and potential of these trade unions. One strain of thought covered by the terms 'workerist' and 'classist' is a variant of a disease of long standing in the world trade union movement — economism. Lenin wrote of the drift towards economism in Russia:

"'Politics always obediently follows economics', etc. etc., became the fashion, exercising an irresistible influence upon the masses of the youth who were attracted to the movement but who, in the majority of cases, were acquainted only with such fragments of Marxism as were expounded in legally appearing publications".<sup>3</sup>

It was economism of this type which formed the core of Joe Foster's address to the 1982 FOSATU conference so ably demolished by Toussaint in his *African Communist* article "A Trade Union is Not a Political Party".<sup>4</sup> The question of the role of the trade union movement and its alliances with the democratic movement as a whole is still hotly debated, as indicated, for example, by the differing positions taken by various trade unions on the issue of affiliation to the United Democratic Front. In a recent issue of the Cape Town publication *Social Review*, an anonymous author, replying to an article in a previous issue attacking the workerist line on class alliances, wrote:

"I will argue that, if the workers are to lead the struggle, a stronger socialist consciousness should be developed in the working class, workers should take the lead and form strong worker-led alliances."<sup>5</sup>

How is this to be achieved? The writer gives no clues — apparently it is to be by a sort of spontaneous combustion. The worshipping of the ‘spontaneity’ of the working class movement and defence of its ‘purity’ are characteristic of the thinking of some of the intellectuals working in the independent trade union movement. Arguing against alliances with other classes and strata in the broad political struggle, they proclaim that “the workers themselves must decide when the time is ripe to join such an alliance, and under what conditions.”<sup>6</sup>

Committing the same fundamental errors as those whom Lenin struggled against, our own worshippers of spontaneity argue that “it is necessary for clear socialist understanding to develop within the working class, so that workers themselves are the source for socialist ideas”.<sup>7</sup> The author of these words would probably call himself a Marxist or even a Leninist. He refers obliquely to Lenin in his article, arguing that Lenin’s ideas on economism, written in 1903, were later revised by him. In fact, the successful course of the revolution in Russia depended to a large extent on the correct application of Lenin’s theoretical work on the need to form ‘the party of a new type’ as expounded in this very same text.

Let us then remind ourselves that Lenin underlined that socialist consciousness cannot be built in the sphere restricted to the relations between employer and employee. In *What is to be Done* he demonstrated that “the sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of all classes and strata to the state and government, the sphere of relations between all classes...”<sup>8</sup> Thus the necessity of a proletarian class political party.

Another factor which Lenin stressed should be carefully considered by those inclined to the workerist approach is that economism can serve the interests of the bourgeoisie. The ruling class is highly skilled in remaining unruffled by revolutionary rhetoric if it sees that its own interests are ultimately being promoted. The separation of the trade union movement from the broad political struggle in South Africa would achieve just such a result. One would have thought these intellectuals had themselves done sufficient research on capital’s strategy of reform and cooption to realise the dangers of this line of thinking.

### **When To Form a Party**

Advocates of the ‘workerist’ line hotly deny that their arguments negate the role of a class political party. However they argue that “as yet there are no specifically political organisations (at least in developed form) of the working

class in South Africa.”<sup>9</sup> These sentiments have been echoed by some of the FOSATU leadership.

If this grouping are to be taken at their word, then it would appear that they are waiting for a working class political organisation to emerge when, through their collective trade union work, the workers ‘strengthen’ their socialist consciousness and spontaneously come up with the idea. If this were what our intellectuals are waiting for then perhaps we could just chastise them for political naivete. But it is not. Reading their publications it is possible to discern a different strategy.

Some of them have become fascinated with the example of Brazil. A recent article on this country in the *South African Labour Bulletin* attempts to draw parallels with developments in South Africa. In Brazil, they record, mass militant trade unionism has led to the birth of a political party which “rapidly developed amongst workers, the unemployed, grassroots sections of the church, progressive youth and left intellectuals...” The author mentions almost as an aside that this party “has drawn much hostility from the supporters of the illegal Brazilian Communist Party ... which *claims* (my emphasis — R.N.) that, historically, they form the party of the workers”.<sup>10</sup>

Brazil also features in the study programme drawn up by the academics involved in FOSATU’s educational work, and is discussed in the FOSATU journal. Here the issues are even more simplified and in case the worker readership should get the wrong idea, the Brazilian Communist Party is not mentioned by name:

“It was the workers in metal and textiles in Sao Paulo who started to reorganise the unofficial unions. Every year since 1977 workers have struck in support of recognition and better wages ... Out of this the Workers’ Party was started in order to represent workers in the planned elections. This was met with great opposition from the state, other political parties and the official trade union leaders —”<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the authors of this type of material are aware that resort to open anti-communism will not win them support amongst the organised working class. However, their attempt to ignore the programmes and even existence of the ANC and the SACP amount to the same thing. This isolationism or political non-alignment will in the long run prove their greatest weakness in their attempts to use the trade union movement as a vehicle for the creation of a ‘workers’ party’. In the meantime, our class enemies, the bourgeoisie, must be watching these stirrings of ultra-leftism and petty-bourgeois ideology with some relish.

These attempts to conceal the history, strategy and tactics of the existing organs of the liberation movement, the ANC and SACP, must be countered



both in the unions and at the level of theoretical debate in both legal and illegal propaganda. Some of the writing associated with this grouping is highly divisive and detrimental to the mass movement. An article in the Wits student publication *Work in Progress*, for example, characterises the United Democratic Front as 'radical liberal' with a class base lying "in the black — and especially Indian petty bourgeoisie. This, at any rate, is the stratum whose demands and interests the radical liberals most forcefully articulate"<sup>12</sup>.

It is this type of analysis which most clearly reveals the theoretical deficiencies of these 'legal Marxists'. They have not confronted the fundamental questions posed by our revolutionary process. They do not understand the significance of the national democratic revolution nor the leading role played by the working class within it. They have not perceived the interaction between national and class oppression which gives South African revolutionaries the specific strategic tasks laid out in the programmes of the ANC and the SACP.

### **Incomplete Answers**

Of course the incorrect theories we have cited do not go unanswered in the legal publications in South Africa, and some of the counter-arguments to the 'classists' are quite effective. However, it must be conceded that 'Aesopian' language does have its limitations — certain things cannot be said. In the conditions of South Africa the full defence of the programmes and policies of the liberation movements is only possible in publications which are illegal. After all, real Marxism is illegal.

A look at what we can call the work of 'legal Marxists' in South Africa reveals a distinct type of political culture which encompasses even those who regard themselves as part of the progressive forces. The reasons for this are to be found in the composition of the intelligentsia which because of the special type of colonialism operating in our society has produced a disproportionate national balance within this grouping. Another problem for them has been that the type of 'Marxist' literature they have been able to study is restricted. While some may argue that Poulantzes and Althusser offer insights into the realm of class structure and ideology, the work of these 'new philosophers' does not offer what is needed to tackle the pressing problems of our political reality.

It is to the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin that we must turn to find our guide to action. And it is crucial that in the South African context we concentrate more on the national question and particularly on Lenin's

theoretical elaboration of it. We do not become an ounce less 'socialistic' by paying attention to this fundamental task.

Lenin showed just how vital it is to formulate the correct elaboration of the 'present stage' of any revolutionary process, and thus to make the right strategic and tactical decisions. To fail to come to grips with the national question in South Africa means to lose touch with the real world. It is essential that we recognise the indissoluble link between theory and practice; that we understand that theory is a generalisation of practice and must correctly reflect what takes place in real life. Only on this basis can we understand the necessity for the broadest alliance of democratic forces to overthrow the racist regime.

As has been indicated, it is those forces amongst the intelligentsia who have lost touch with the reality of the struggle for state power who are most active in trying to build a new 'workers' party'. Inevitably, their activities and arguments are bringing to light their basic anti-communism. The people recognise anti-communism when it emanates from the racist regime, and they will come to recognise it in any new garb. Conversely, it is largely because of the efforts of the SACP throughout its more than 60 years of struggle that the proletariat is today able to recognise who serves its interests, defends its gains and advances its cause.

The tasks facing the progressive and democratic forces of our country are onerous. We are called upon to be battle-ready in every arena of struggle. The sphere of revolutionary theory is a vital one. Frederick Engels spoke of the struggle of the 'workers' movement being waged according to its three aspects:

"the theoretical, the political, and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists) — in harmony and in its interconnections, and in a systematic way."<sup>13</sup>

At this stage in our revolutionary struggle it is more vital than ever that we heed and act upon his words.

#### Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p.109
2. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p.385
3. V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p.119
4. *The African Communist*, No. 93, Second Quarter 1983
5. *Social Review*, December 1983, p.4
6. *Ibid.* p.6
7. *Ibid.* p.13
8. V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1. p.152

9. *Social Review*, op.cit. p.6
10. *South African Labour Bulletin*, May 1984, p.58
11. *Fosatu Worker News*, September 1983, No 24. p.5
12. *Work In Progress*, No. 30, 1984, p.18
13. F. Engels in *Lenin Selected Works*, Vol. 1. p.111



# **WHY WORLD CAPITAL BACKS SOUTH AFRICA**

## **The Role of the Transnational Corporations and Foreign Investment in South Africa.<sup>(1)</sup>**

The apartheid economy of South Africa has always relied heavily on foreign capital to power its development and expansion.

The South African economic revolution, ushered in by the discovery of gold and diamonds, was wholly funded by foreign inputs of capital, technology and expertise. The mining revolution transformed South Africa from a primary producing country based on agricultural products to a country with a modern economic base, because it stimulated the growth and development of every other sector of the economy. The agricultural, fishing and livestock breeding sectors grew rapidly to provide food for the newly-emerging industrial working class; the coal mines were developed to provide the main source of energy and this fueled the growth and development of the electricity generating industry; roads, railways and a modern transport and communications system arose out of the needs of linking the centres of mining with harbours, cities and the sources of migrant labour. Commerce, finance and banking advanced the growth of the money market. Overnight, towns, cities and shanty towns, to house the army of black workers, mushroomed, stimulating the building and allied industries.

Most important of all, the economic revolution led to the creation and development of the black proletariat.

Without the large inputs of foreign capital needed to develop the mining industries this economic revolution would have been impossible. Foreign investment "provided finance and technology without which South African economic development would have been little more significant than that elsewhere on the African continent."<sup>(2)</sup> By 1910 minerals accounted for almost 82 per cent of South Africa's exports.

After the second world war the pattern of investment in South Africa began to change with a growing emphasis on investment in the manufacturing sector. As with the extractive industries, predominantly based around the gold mines, foreign investment played a key role and assumed dominant positions in this sector too. British and later American capital and finance spread from mining to such areas as automobiles, textiles, hosiery, petroleum, refrigeration and shipping. By the 1970's the mining and agricultural base had prepared the way for a diversified manufacturing sector which contributed almost 30 per cent of the gross domestic product annually.

At present some 2000 foreign companies operate in South Africa. Of these, 65 transnational corporations have been identified. The majority of these are from 11 countries — 22 from the USA, 19 from Britain, 11 from West Germany, 3 from France, 3 from Japan and the rest from the Netherlands, Belgium and other capitalist countries. Total foreign investment has been estimated at around 25 billion dollars.<sup>(3)</sup> The transnational corporations are not only playing a dominant role in the production process, but are situated in key sectors — in the heavy engineering and capital goods sector, in the mining and automotive and motor vehicles industries, in agro-business and transport, in the high technology sectors such as electronics, computers and information and communications sectors, in the strategic petro-chemical, oil-from-coal and nuclear energy industries. According to the Franzen Commission on Fiscal and Monetary Policy in South Africa, the TNC's contribution to the aggregate South African production was put at almost 40 per cent in 1970.

Without the involvement and continuing collaboration of the TNC's in particular, the South African regime would be incapable of sustaining the tide of national liberation within South Africa and Namibia headed by the ANC and SWAPO.

### **Investing in Apartheid**

More than a century of foreign investment in the apartheid economy not only created the basis of a modern, diversified economy, but played a key role in



sustaining the pre-capitalist patterns of racism and creating the cheap labour system which persists to this day. The essential element for transforming money, machines and the means of production into *capital* and ensuring its reproduction is *labour-power*. In the South African context the cost of labour-power (wages) has always been kept at the lowest possible minimum in order to ensure the highest rate of return on capital. To this end the South African state played the crucial role, and continues to do so today. A vast array of laws and regulations have been placed on the statute book to regulate and control the flow of labour to the centres of capitalist production. The fundamental character of all the labour laws is that they are directed at black workers, in particular the African working class. The development of capitalism in South Africa is inseparably bound up with the development of institutionalised racism. The pass laws, migrant labour system, job reservation schemes, unequal employment opportunities and the entire edifice of the apartheid system have been a means of maximising profit through the super-exploitation of black workers: the racism prevalent in the pre-capitalist formation was reinforced, modified and used as the means of extracting increased surplus-value from African workers.

The interests of foreign investors, the giant TNC's and ruling class in South Africa coincide. They are interested in maintaining the apartheid system. The state ensures that the supply of labour is sustained, easily controlled and without any political or economic rights to challenge the bosses of finance and industry. It legislates and intervenes to maintain wages at the minimum possible level (as most surveys have shown, well below the margin necessary to sustain a black worker and his family). It retains a vast repressive machinery to act against workers' demands for higher wages and better working conditions. It restricts trade union rights, preventing the full exercise of the right of black workers in the economic sphere, and excludes the black people from the political process completely. The result has been super-profits through the super-exploitation of the black workers. Profit rates are estimated at between 20 and 25 per cent in South Africa as compared with 12 and 14 per cent in the developing countries generally, and much below the latter in the developed capitalist countries.

The TNC's also find South Africa a paradise for investment because of the availability of strategic raw materials for the production process. Any socio-political changes that threaten the access of the TNC's to this material base of supplies essential to their profits has been actively resisted and the ghost of a "foreign threat" has always been invoked to bring the support of capitalist governments on the side of the racist regime. They fear the loss of this

important centre for international monopoly capital. South Africa already serves as a workshop for several international monopolies who have transferred production from the high-cost centres of the metropolitan base to the low-cost South African sector. This has the added advantage of increasing the volume of production for exports and much more competitive prices on the international markets.

There is much talk among the representatives of the TNC's about South Africa's strategic importance to the west. The racist regime has also used this argument as a deterrent against economic sanctions and "interference in the affairs of South Africa". Many apologists for the apartheid state quote the fact that, in the year ending 31 March, 1978, South Africa's ports provided docking and repair facilities for 12,552 ships. Another oft-cited statement is that when the Suez Canal was closed, Cape Town and Durban ports carried the additional load of oil and other shipping. All this, it is claimed, enhances South Africa's strategic importance to the "free world". The apologists for the regime assert that opposing South Africa is suicidal, since the 2300 vessels which pass the Cape every month may all be vulnerable to "Soviet intervention". What the TNC's and their political representatives in the major capitalist countries have put forward as a "reasonable proposition" to meet the demands for political change is the notion of "gradual evolutionary change without violence". What they fear most is a victory for the revolutionary forces headed by the ANC which will usher in a programme of fundamental reconstruction of society which will endanger their interests.

### **The TNC's and Black Workers**

Recent estimates have put the number of workers directly or indirectly dependent on foreign companies and the TNC's at between 2 and 3 million workers and their dependants. This would mean that something of the order of one-quarter of all economically active people in South Africa are employed by foreign companies.<sup>(4)</sup> The vast majority of these are black workers. This fact, however, should not obscure another equally important fact: unemployment among black workers has risen continuously over the decades since the 1950's. Even in the boom years of the 1960's, unemployment was estimated at a million black workers and rising. It is now estimated that the unemployment level among black workers has topped the 3 million mark, or approximately 20-25 per cent of the total black workforce. Since the majority of unemployed are to be found in the manufacturing and capital-intensive industries, precisely those dominated by foreign firms, it is

reasonable to conclude that there is a direct correlation between the role of the TNC's and the levels of black unemployed.

Equally important is the fact of decreased real earnings by the black working people over recent decades. Estimates indicate that the share of income earned by black workers has remained at between 19 and 21 per cent of total earnings in South Africa. There have, it is true, been rises in wages in some sectors because of the militant actions of black workers, but the base from which these increases have started has been so low as to make very little impact on the general standard of living of black workers and their families. Furthermore, the small wage increases won have been eroded by spiralling inflation, and living conditions have been undermined by the huge number of unemployed.

Faced by the massive wave of worker-militancy that swept South Africa since the turn of the 1970's as well as the campaigns for disinvestment mounted by anti-apartheid forces in the capitalist countries, representatives of the TNC's and their governments began formulating a defence mechanism in the form of codes of conduct. Both the United States (Sullivan Principles) and the EEC countries have published codes of conduct which have been *recommended* to companies as the basis of "fair employment practice". The main aim of the codes has been to improve the image of foreign companies operating in apartheid South Africa and to dampen the drive by black workers for higher wages, better working conditions and employment opportunities and unfettered trade union rights. At the same time the codes have been aimed at defusing the movement for total disinvestment in the apartheid economy by all foreign companies. In practice the codes have been largely ignored by the TNC's. The truth is that the TNC's invest in South Africa not despite, but precisely because of the apartheid system. The codes of conduct were never designed to act against the apartheid system but to reinforce it in the face of militant opposition inside the country and abroad.

### **The TNC's in South Africa's economy**

Investment by the TNC's and other foreign companies is distributed over wide sectors of the South African economy. The 1973 South African census on foreign investment revealed that 7.5 per cent of all direct foreign investment was concentrated in mining and quarrying, 43.8 in manufacturing, 14.2 per cent in trade and 26.5 per cent in finance. In total, 92 per cent of all direct investments were placed in those sectors of the economy which accounted for 40 per cent of total gross domestic foreign investment.<sup>(5)</sup> The TNC's have always had strong

links with the mining industry. Next to the USA and the Soviet Union, South Africa has the most varied supply of raw materials in the world. South Africa is the main producer of gold in the capitalist world accounting for 75.5 per cent of annual production, with equally significant production of iron ore and diamonds. South Africa is estimated to possess some 48 per cent of the world's manganese reserves, 49 per cent of gold, 64 per cent of vanadium, 83 per cent of chrome and 86 per cent of the world's platinum reserves.

By 1972 Britain accounted for some 66 per cent of all foreign investments in South Africa with the USA accounting for 20 per cent. Between them British and American companies and TNC's contributed a total of 85 per cent of all foreign investments in South Africa.<sup>(6)</sup>

A brief examination of the sectoral placements of foreign investment in South Africa will serve to reveal both the dependency of the South African regime on foreign investments and the complicity of the capitalist countries in perpetuating the system of apartheid. British TNC's and capital have traditionally been linked with the development of the gold mining industry. By the 1960's British companies accounted for 60 per cent of all private holdings in the mining sector as a whole and investment in mining represented almost one-third of all British investment in South Africa.

British TNC's such as Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), Consolidated Gold Fields, Charter Consolidated and Lonhro, to name only the majors, have continued to invest in and develop the mining sector of the economy.

RTZ is the largest of British mining groups with capital employed in December 1978 of £2,038 million and profits of £284 million. The Palabora mine in which RTZ has a 38.9 per cent interest, and which it manages, produces some 125,000 tons of copper, approximately one million tons of magnetite, 100,000 tons of vermiculite, as well as uranium and other precious mineral by-products. From 1970 Palabora produced £161 million profit — nearly 21.5 per cent of the the group's pre-tax profits of around £138 million in its first five years of operation.<sup>(7)</sup> Consolidated Gold Fields (CGF) through its associate, Gold Fields of South Africa, has reaped enormous profits from the group's gold mining operations which provide some 20 per cent of South Africa's gold output. CGF also has important interests in other mining sectors such as zinc, tin, platinum, lead, silver and copper. Like other TNC's it has made huge profits from the exploitation of cheap migrant labour. The group's pre-tax profits in 1978 amounted to £69.8 million on a turnover of £953.2 million.

Figures for US corporate direct investments show that some 13 per cent of all direct investment is centred on mining.<sup>(8)</sup> TNC's from Canada, West

Germany and Switzerland have added to the number of giant conglomerates now busy in the extractive industries.

### **In The Manufacturing Sector**

However, it is in the diversified manufacturing sector of the economy that the TNC's have concentrated investment, finance, technology and expertise. In the post-war years, commencing with the 1950's, the large industrial corporations of the capitalist countries began pumping capital into the South African manufacturing sector as an outlet for surplus capital and in search of greater profits. Local capital had already begun building the industrial infrastructures for the industries which grew in the wake of the mining industries. The TNC's not only developed these to a far greater extent, but opened up new areas of industries. In the process, the TNC's accelerated the centralisation of capital in the hands of a few giant monopolies. One writer noted: "It was this process — the influx of foreign capital and the tendency toward greater centralisation, that constituted the South African manufacturing revolution of the 1960's."<sup>(9)</sup> As the same writer noted,

"The post-war period saw a major change in the pattern and forms of foreign investment in South Africa. Before the war, foreign investment was predominantly British and concentrated in the mining industry, which although locally owned, attracted capital in the form of portfolio investments in stocks and shares — i.e. indirect investment. After the war this pattern changed and foreign investment took the form of foreign corporations establishing their own branches and subsidiaries and facilities in South Africa — direct investment."<sup>(10)</sup>

As noted above, these TNC's now dominate strategic sectors of the manufacturing industry.

Most importantly, South Africa has been, and continues to be, largely dependent on the TNC's for the provision of capital goods i.e machines to produce machines. In 1975, for example, South Africa imported almost 50 per cent of machinery needed in the domestic sales sector at a cost to the balance of payments of R1,819 million.<sup>(11)</sup> According to the *New York Times*, nearly 80 per cent of private industrial production is either controlled by foreign companies or influenced by them.<sup>(12)</sup> South Africa has no base for the production of modern electronic equipment and this crucial gap in the production process has been filled by the TNC's who have both the massive capital required for this development and extensive research and development facilities for this area of production. Thus in a survey conducted in 1974 nearly 74 per cent of manufacturing firms indicated that they were dependent for 90 per cent of their technology on foreign owned and controlled companies.<sup>(13)</sup>



## **The Field of Finance**

The other critical area in which the TNC's have been of decisive assistance to the South African economy, the racist regime and their own corporate interests is in the financing field. Foreign banks have played a crucial role in bailing the South African regime out of economic and political crises. After the Sharpsville massacre in 1960 the South African economy was seriously jeopardised with the outflow of some 334 million dollars of private capital.<sup>(14)</sup> The crisis was averted with a corresponding inflow of a massive loan of 84 million dollars. Chase Manhattan contributed 10 million, the First National Bank, 5 million, and "an anonymous source", 69 million dollars. In addition, the USA was instrumental in South Africa's receiving 66 million dollars in loans and credits from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.<sup>(15)</sup>

During the recession that hit the South African economy as part of the crisis of world capitalism in the period 1974-75, US banks were able to mobilise nearly 2.5 billion dollars to rescue the South African regime. According to a study produced by the Christian Council for South Africa capital loans raised specifically by British banks on the Euro-currency markets between 1970 and 1976 amounted to nearly 1,854.5 million dollars. All these loans were on the account of the South African government or the latter's corporate state sector. Of these loans, the largest was for the SASOL II project of oil-from-coal, amounting to some 500 million dollars.<sup>(16)</sup> In 1973 the South African government itself raised a loan of 100 million Deutschmarks for a period of 15 years. Even after the Soweto massacres, the South African Railways and Harbours, one of the largest of state-owned corporations, was able to raise a sum of DM35 millions for three years on a private placement in 1977. Today, there are almost 30 international banks with representative offices and subsidiaries in South Africa.

Bank loans to South Africa are currently the most favoured means of providing capital to the South African regime and the private sector. The South African government relies heavily on foreign loans to make up its budget deficits (for example, the IMF loan of 1.2 billion dollars negotiated in 1982) as well as to finance the expansion programme of the public corporations. A Corporate Data Exchange Survey revealed that between 1972 and 1978 no fewer than 328 foreign banks were involved in loans to South Africa.<sup>(17)</sup> A United Nations Survey revealed:

"Despite repeated resolutions of the General Assembly, adopted by overwhelming majorities, banks and financial institutions in the western countries — particularly the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Federal Republic of Germany and the

United States of America — have provided no less than 2,756 million dollars in loans to the apartheid regime of South Africa, the parastatal corporations of the regime, and South African companies, since the beginning of 1979.<sup>18)</sup>

The other critical area in which the TNC's are playing a decisive role in upholding the apartheid system is in the field of energy. South Africa was, until the development of the SASOL oil-from-coal plants, wholly dependent on the import of crude oil to fuel its economy and military machine. In the aftermath of the ban by the Arab oil producing countries of oil and petroleum products to South Africa, and especially since the Iranian revolution (South Africa used to rely on Iran for 90 per cent of its crude oil imports), the oil majors have increasingly taken over the role of minimising the effects of the international embargo on the South African economy. Five TNC's — Caltex, Mobil, Shell, British Petroleum, Total and Exxon — dominate the supply of petroleum to South Africa. Annual sales of these TNC's in South Africa totalled approximately 2,551 million dollars in 1977 and their total investments amounted to 1,310 million dollars by 1978.<sup>19)</sup> Together with international banks, which provided finance, these oil majors are directly involved with the provision of technology and other facilities to the SASOL plants.

South Africa's nuclear energy programme, centred around the Koeberg plant, was made possible with finance, technology and expertise from the western capitalist countries.

No wonder then that the late Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of South Africa's apartheid policy, was able to claim:

"Each trade agreement, each bank loan, each new investment is another brick in our continued existence."

### **The TNC's and the South African state**

The South African state has played an active role in shaping the direction and pace of economic development since the establishment of the first parastatal corporation ISCOR (Iron and Steel Corporation) in 1928. In recent years the state has accelerated and expanded its role in the economy, and more often than not with the active collaboration of the international monopolies controlling finance and technology.

The expanded role of the state has resulted from two inter-related political developments in the decades since the early 1960's. Firstly, the intensified pressures and threats of international economic sanctions imposed serious constraints on domestic capital accumulation and weakened the incentives for the continued upwards swing of direct foreign investments. Secondly,

and more importantly, the revolutionary political changes that swept southern Africa and the development of the liberation struggle in South Africa itself forced the racist regime to attempt to insulate the economy from serious disruption.

Over the last two decades the "public" corporations — Iscor, Escom (electricity), Sasol (oil-from-coal), Armscor (weapons development), SATS (transport) and Foskor (chemicals) have all expanded rapidly in an effort to bring about economic self-sufficiency. The growth of the public corporations is a crucial element in attempting to maintain white supremacy rule. In more recent years, the Uranium Enrichment Corporation has been allocated the strategic task of coordinating and planning the regime's ambitious nuclear programme, not only to provide the means and wherewithal to develop the regime's nuclear energy, but also to expand the facilities of enriched uranium as an export commodity to the developed countries and those embarked on programmes of nuclear energy. The aim is to make the developed and other nuclear countries dependent on South African supplies of enriched uranium and thus retain their support in the face of international pressures to isolate the regime completely. Although the state was already involved in the South African economy in the late 1920's, and increasingly from the 1940's, its role from the 1970's onwards became the dominant feature of economic development.

Thus two distinctly related tendencies became reinforced during the decade of the seventies — the tendency toward greater centralisation and monopoly of private capital, predominantly foreign-owned and controlled, and the monopoly positions the state secured in the infrastructural development of the economy. State and private monopoly capital is the dominant feature of South African capital formation today.

The major South African public corporations are those concerned with the provision of infrastructural facilities essential to the economic growth of the country — energy, transport and communications, iron and steel, power, armaments and chemicals. It should be noted that this domination of the state in these sectors has also had the aim of reducing contradictory demands by the various fractions of capital for these commodities. In other words, the South African state not only acts as an instrument of monopoly capital, but is directly engaged in neutralising the competing claims of capital on essential resources over which it has not direct ownership and control.

For the decade 1970-1980 public corporation investment requirements were quoted as a minimum of 12 billion dollars, the major share of which would have to be financed from abroad. This provides the clue to the strong

links established between the racist state and large numbers of the TNC's and financial institutions and banks in the capitalist countries. Thus we find that the Swiss Banking Corporation arranged a 25 million dollar loan for ESCOM in January 1978, and in the same year ESCOM raised another loan of 9.4 million dollars from Commerzbank of West Germany. ISCOR raised a total of 49 million dollars via the Beyerische Vereinsbank in 1978 and the Deutsche Bank of the FRG organised another loan of 12.2 million dollars for South African Railways and Harbours in June of the same year.<sup>(20)</sup>

Much of the borrowing that financed ISCOR's development came from the transnational finance institutions. ISCOR is the backbone of South Africa's iron and steel industry with assets worth 3.5 billion dollars and production capacity of 3 million tons a year. Most of ISCOR's development finance has emanated from international banking consortiums. The United Nations Survey cited above identified a total of 181 lending banks from 18 countries which provided a total of 57 loans amounting to 2,756.8 million dollars.<sup>(21)</sup> Almost two-thirds of the total loans went toward financing the state-owned corporations and the government budget. ESCOM received 893.2 million dollars, the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, 28.0 million, the Industrial Development Corporation, 45.8 million, the Strategic Oil Fund (SOF), 108.5 million, SAR and H (now the South African Transport Services — SATS) received 370.4 millions and the state itself borrowed 376.8 million dollars.<sup>(22)</sup>

## Conclusion

Recent events in southern Africa confirm the view presented in this article that the TNC's are wholly behind the South African regime in attempting to retain the sub-continent of Africa as an enclave of imperialist domination. P.W.Botha's visit to Europe has been aimed at breaking the ring of isolation imposed on the racist regime by the progressive international community. The fact that European governments have seen fit to invite and have discussions with the high priest of apartheid is an indication of the strength wielded by the TNC's and their interests in south and southern Africa.

It is time, more than ever before, to consolidate the ranks of anti-apartheid fighters in all parts of the world to defeat Botha's attempts to impose another Nkomati Accord internationally. The struggle for the complete isolation of the racist regime has to be intensified at every level. More to the point, the international community has the responsibility of strengthening the force of action towards comprehensive and mandatory economic sanctions, reinforced by a mandatory all-round oil embargo against the Pretoria

regime. The success of such campaigns will immeasurably strengthen the force of revolution inside South Africa and Namibia as well as within the front line states.

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# REVIEWS

## MORE LIKE COUNTER—INSURGENCY THAN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

**Black Politics in South Africa since 1945**, by Tom Lodge,  
(Longmans, London, 1983, £5.95)

The forties were specially significant for the social and economic transformations in South Africa that were begun and continued into contemporary times. Lodge's work substantially is concerned with the resistance to the hardships generated by these developments, and the political strategies deployed by state and capital against the offensive of workers, peasants, students, women and youth over four decades of resistance. The scene is set from the mid-forties onward, with an historical sweep quite remarkably detailed and always assiduously documented.

Beginning with the dislocation of the international capitalist economy during World War II, the author traces the consequent industrial expansion of South Africa, the growth of the manufacturing industry, changes in the labour structure and the manifold increase in the number of African women workers, especially in the manufacturing industry. The urban expansion was accompanied by unprecedented urban growth (100% between 1939 and 1952) which together with urban poverty, poor housing, high rents and below subsistence wages, exacerbated urban poverty. These together with a crisis in the countryside — 10% of the households in the Transkei were landless by the mid-forties and similar destitution was evident elsewhere — sparked off an uninterrupted series of resistance struggles, which because of

their sustained pressure, intensity and opposition to the apartheid state form a significant part of the process of the South African revolution.

It is this latter proposition that the author rejects: the struggles he records, some of them consciously inspired by Congress, others 'spontaneous' or motivated outside of the mainstream of the liberatory movement, have no special revolutionary implications, he says. On the contrary, they are seen by him as fragmentary and individual happenings, generated by specific and local pressures. The book is therefore a collection of a number of carefully selected themes rather than a central study of the liberation movement. This treatment enables him to emphasise the local specificity of each struggle and, incidentally, inflate the "Africanist" dimension, in particular the PAC and Poqo, for which organisations the author emerges as unofficial historian.

Tom Lodge is a graduate of the University of York's Centre for Southern African studies, now teaching political history at the University of the Witwatersrand. The themes he has selected give emphasis to those struggles in which the focus can be switched away from the ANC and its allies. He highlights what he sees as the "variations" and "inconsistencies" at a local level of "spontaneous" resistance or maybe the rising up of an urban crowd "united only momentarily in its opposition to bus fares, or peasants, determined to destroy a barbed wire fence erected without their consent" (p ix). It just so happens that eight of the nine less generalised and more specific of his selections, lend themselves to an extended elaboration of the role of the PAC! Where this is historically doubtful and the presence of the ANC is indisputable, the author attributes *equal* weight to the influence of either organisation, with consequences that are at the very least historically misleading.

The author's method is to dredge to the surface the tension and weaknesses between political organisations; to identify conflicts between "formal institutionalised resistance" and informal "spontaneous" protest. The effect is to compromise the aims of the resistance and obscure its goals and effectiveness. He seeks to avoid interpreting the events as "the careful unfolding of a continuous grand strategy", raising political consciousness to "fresh heights" and "hastening the arrival of all the necessary conditions for revolution". In all this, he contends, "the (Communist) party has a vanguard role: it plans campaigns which in terms of their proclaimed objectives are doomed to failure, but which their very frustration will succeed in lifting the scales from the eyes of those who hitherto believed the existing system capable of significant reform" (p.153)

Not surprisingly, no evidence is adduced to test this proposition. Nor is there any evidence for the author's hypothetical question as to whether

opportunities and chances were not squandered by the ANC which, guided by its own class interests, which were those of “an aspirant bourgeoisie”, curbed popular militancy in a situation where “the people, the masses, did not need to be cajoled into resistance” and where in the event the ANC sought to “restrain the course of protest and guide it into channels in which it would institutionalise, bureaucratised and blunt the keenness of popular anger” (p.154)

One of the strategies adopted by the author is therefore to detach the ANC and Communist Party from specific struggles and where practicable attribute the resistance to the undirected spontaneity of the masses or to the so-called “Africanist” dimension. The rural struggles in Witzieshoek, the Marico District, Mpondoland and Tembuland would to a large extent (according to the author’s rendering) be evidence of the former, and the anti-pass demonstrations of Sharpeville and Langa as well as the bus boycott in the fifties at Evaton, examples of the latter.

What Tom Lodge is not concerned to emphasise *at the same level of detail and analysis* are those struggles where the ANC and its allies were most prominent and bore the brunt of the State’s repression. The combined impact of this style of historical criticism in which the emphasis of the analysis is directed away from the main thrust of struggle to the ideological cleavages between the actors, or the imperfections of their leaders, is to marginalise the importance of struggles and detract from their overall national significance. Regrettably the dense documentation and immense research that underpin this work are blighted by the author’s diversionary approach: information cited from this study would therefore have to be more than usually carefully decoded, in order to free it from innuendo as well as unwarranted inferences that have been implied rather than made explicit.

L.N.

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## **SOVIET AUTHOR PROVIDES A FASCINATING INSIGHT INTO SOWETO**

**The Black Inhabitants of White City** by V. Gorodnov (History Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Moscow 1983).

The book has the sub-title *The life and struggles of an African ghetto*. The title, says the author, was chosen to reflect the inter-relations, not only of black

Soweto and white Johannesburg, but of the black majority and white minority in South Africa. This inter-relationship is determined by the development of the capitalist economy which unites them and by apartheid which divides them. The result is a deep antagonism and relentless struggle.

Gorodnov has chosen Soweto because it is typical of South African reality. This black town is the result of urbanisation under conditions of apartheid and discrimination. The regime meant it to become a kind of proving ground for the system of control over the social processes taking place amongst urban dwellers which it required in order to keep them in subjection. Yet the people rose against their oppressors.

The aim of the book is to consider and describe the socio-economic situation of urban Africans and the socio-psychological processes taking place.

In the history and fate of Soweto, Gorodnov sees a focussing of the most acute problems of Africans and he pays particular attention to the process of urbanisation, in the course of which their life-style, consciousness and values undergo changes.

The first chapter deals in great detail with the origins of African townships and of Soweto itself, presenting precise historical, economic, legal data interspersed with graphic eye-witness accounts, poetry and songs.

The author gives a picture of what present-day life in Soweto is like and here, too, there is a remarkable combination of solid facts and figures with colourful and moving descriptions of daily life.

This reviewer found the section *Fusion of Traditionalism and Contemporary Life* the most fascinating. This covers 'detrribalisation and adaptation', 'city family and its problems', 'Christianity and traditional beliefs' and 'political and social organisations', all of which are a significant part of the life of Soweto people. These are traditional in form, but the content is determined by contemporary problems of class contradictions and the national liberation struggle. The urge of the people to organise in defence of their interests aids the development of their socio-political consciousness. This process depends upon class factors and the level of cultural and psychological urbanisation. In its turn, the level of consciousness affects the speed of cultural and psychological urbanisation.

The 1976 Soweto uprising itself is presented in meticulously documented detail, graphically and with great empathy and understanding, presenting its results and lessons. In his chronicle of resistance up to 1981, the author describes the role of the ANC and SACP and pays tribute to them.

Gorodnov's general conclusion is that the urban population represents the basic striking force of the liberation struggle. He contends that "it is in these

areas and not in the pseudo-independent bantustans that the future of South Africa will be decided."

The book concludes with the author's conviction that loyalty to the slogan *Amandla Ngawethu* is a guarantee of the successful development of the liberation movement.

There are particularly interesting addenda, including statistical tables on total population, ethnic composition of Africans, growth of African urban population, income, occupation, rates of pay, literacy, in South Africa as a whole, in the Transvaal and in Soweto. There are also life stories of Sowetans themselves. There is an extensive bibliography, indices of names and geographic names.

*Black Inhabitants of a White City* is a remarkable work. It is brimful of thoroughly researched information (though the author complains of paucity of material), historical, social, political and economic data, based on serious Marxist analysis. The author's scholarship and special interest in the processes of urbanisation add an extra dimension. Very well chosen, frequent quotations from literature, particularly African poetry, give the book the qualities of warmth, vividness and beauty and make it eminently readable as well as informative and instructive.

One would welcome an English edition of this valuable book.

G.G.

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## **PROBLEMS OF THE ZIMBABWE TRANSITION**

**The Story of My Life**, by Joshua Nkomo. (Methuen, London. Price £9.95.)

Joshua Nkomo is still active and a figure of controversy in Zimbabwe politics, to the direction of which his book is a contribution. When Zimbabwe achieved its independence at midnight on April 17, 1980, says Nkomo,



“many of those in the crowd at Rufaro stadium, of all parties and all colours, would not have grudged me the name of Father Zimbabwe. I had struggled for thirty years and more to see this moment come”. But he was given a back seat at the ceremony and two years later was thrown out of the government and accused by the media of plotting with South Africa to overthrow the Mugabe government. He writes that he was hounded and harassed by the security police, forcibly prevented from attending a meeting of the executive of the World Peace Council, accused but not charged with unlawful possession of gemstones and the attempted export of 300 dollars in Zimbabwean currency, detained briefly and interrogated, threatened with death and eventually driven into exile in London where he wrote his autobiography. He told a Bulawayo pressman in January 1983:

“My family and I have suffered more in these past eight months than during 13 years of the liberation war”.

What went wrong?

Zapu and Zanu had fought together in the Patriotic Front to defeat the Smith regime, and Nkomo says he hoped they would fight the pre-independence election together as a single party. But, he says, Zanu decided unilaterally to campaign under its own flag as Zanu (PF), leaving Nkomo with no option but to enter the lists as Patriotic Front (ZAPU). The election result was that of the 100 seats in the new parliament, Zanu won 57, Zapu 20, Muzorewa 3, while the remaining 20, reserved for whites, went to Smith’s Rhodesian Front. Nkomo says:

“It was beyond belief. I was deeply distressed... That my party should have won not a single seat in Salisbury, and only twenty seats in the whole western strip from Kariba right down to Beitbridge, I could not believe and still do not believe. Even the known and massive campaign of intimidation could not have achieved that. That the first elections in free Zimbabwe failed to reflect the people’s will is something of which I am sure.”

The next chapter, headed “Zimbabwe’s False Start”, begins: “I slept off the shock of the election’s declared result and awoke as firmly convinced that my party and my followers had been cheated”. How? Nkomo does not explain the mechanics of this deception, but feels that both Zanu and the British administration must share the blame. However, his own story indicates that there may be other explanations for the election result.

Contrasting the guerrilla war strategies of Zapu and Zanu, Nkomo writes that, because of the differing nature of the terrain,

“Our forces, travelling out of Zambia, had to move in small parties and win the absolute trust of the sparse population of the areas they passed through. Zanu forces were able to penetrate the easier frontier facing them in much larger numbers, often in groups of up to a hundred. This in itself imposed much greater

demands on the civilian population whose areas they crossed, especially when the visiting soldiers demanded meat and chickens from their hosts. They adopted a policy of forced political indoctrination of the local population — in Shona they called it *pungwe*, meaning compulsory all-night mass meetings. Zanla, in fact, operated as a political force, while Zipra had to behave in a strictly military way.

“The extra danger was that the Rhodesian side of the Zambia and Botswana borders is inhabited by people most of whom are Sindebele-speaking. Zipra operated in and drew its recruits from these people. But the people living along the Mozambique border are mostly Shona-speaking. So Zanla increasingly became a Shona-speaking army and Zipra a Sindebele-speaking army. Thus the military realities reinforced the tribalistic tendencies which the Zanu leaders were openly fostering.”

Bearing in mind that the Shona-speaking population outnumbers the Sindebele-speaking by about 2 to 1, it is clear that these “tribalistic tendencies” must have had a big influence on the election outcome.

Nkomo also reveals that Zapu and Zipra had a completely different strategic approach to the war against the Smith regime from Zanu and Zanla.

“Zapu and Zipra, in the closest secrecy, had decided that the war must be ended, the agony could not be allowed to drag on. We had set in motion what we called the ‘turning-point’ strategy, for a transformation of the war from a guerrilla operation into a full-scale conflict in which we could match the Smith regime’s armour and air cover with armour and air cover of our own...”

“Our plan was therefore to mount a lightning ground strike across the Zambezi, in order to seize the airfields at Victoria Falls and at Makuti, using armoured vehicles and amphibian transports. The airfields, once acquired, would enable our aircraft to fly and operate freely from our own soil, putting us on a level with Smith’s armed forces. (For security reasons, the plan was not co-ordinated with the Zanla army — but we assumed that when our attack began, Zanla would at once press into renewed guerilla activity, engaging large numbers of Rhodesian troops on the eastern front.)”

The plan was well advanced by the time of the Lancaster House constitutional conference, but “the moment at which we most nearly decided to launch our plan — which would have been irreversible — was when Rhodesian aircraft methodically bombed several strategic bridges within Zambia that would have been absolutely necessary if our tanks and armoured vehicles were to move into position to strike against the airfields across the Zambezi”.

Nkomo says that although nobody but himself and senior Zapu colleagues knew of the plan, it was obvious that the Rhodesians had detailed knowledge of it. “Such knowledge could only have reached them in one way, and that was through information collected by British intelligence in London”.

Where did Nkomo hope to acquire his tanks and armoured and amphibian vehicles? From the Soviet Union, the source of most of Zapu’s

logistical support. It was not a matter of ideology, of which there is little trace in Nkomo's autobiography. He writes:

"We had to get outside support for our liberation struggle, and if we could not get it from the West we would have to ask for it from the East".

But as to *why* the West responded differently from the East Nkomo has little to say. On page 112 he records that in 1961 he visited the Soviet Union for the first time, but says nothing about the social system he saw in operation there. Nevertheless, he is not ungrateful to the Soviet authorities for "their decisive help, extended faithfully over many years", and adds:

"I must emphasise that the Soviets never offered me help. Each time I asked for it I had to give good reasons and explain in detail what I wanted. Some people in the West pretend that anyone wanting to start a revolution need only go to Moscow and they will open up the armoury. It was not at all like that in my case. Once the party officials had decided that I and my party deserved support, they stood faithfully by the decision...In all my discussions, the Soviets never asked for any undertaking about our policies after independence. They were solidly on the side of our national independence, and that was all."

Nkomo's autobiography is crammed with detail about his career, but also contains some significant silences. South African readers will be interested in his reminiscences of his stay in Natal, where he studied at Adam's College, and in Johannesburg, where he obtained a diploma as a social worker at the Hofmeyr School of Social Work. All this was in the 1940s. He was impressed by the great rallies held by the African National Congress and on one occasion met Nelson Mandela. "But", he says, "I was not yet really political". It took time for him to become political.

Nkomo ends his book by recording that during his brief exile in 1983 he appealed to Premier Mugabe to convene a national conference "of all the country's interest groups...to begin the process of reconciliation". Nkomo is still waiting for an answer, but concludes: "For my part, I shall continue working to that end. Long live Zimbabwe!"

Z.N.

## **THE SOVIET PEOPLE MARCH TOWARDS SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM**

**Dynamic Stability: The Soviet Economy Today**, by Victor and Ellen Perlo (Progress Publishers, Price £3.95)

Victor Perlo's book written in collaboration with his wife Ellen is a refreshing antidote to the unceasing hostile criticism of the Soviet economy emanating from sources more interested in fighting the cold war than in economic facts.

The book is rich with new insights into the Soviet economy and the way it functions, into what drives it forward towards even greater achievements at an accelerating pace. It is far from being a dry, academic discourse. As the author puts it, the book is part economic journalism, part fundamental economic analysis, and readers with little knowledge of economics will get as much pleasure and value out of it as those who already have some familiarity with the subject.

Perlo makes many interesting and telling comparisons between the economy of the Soviet Union and that of the United States, where he practises as a professional economist. He points out, however, that even when valid, comparisons made by supporters of capitalism are static, relating to a particular time. "Much more relevant in evaluating social systems is the comparisons of directions and rates of development."

Perlo writes:

"Of course there are some areas in which the USSR will never catch up to — or descend to — the level of the United States, because it doesn't want to spend tens of billions on advertising, or to encourage high-style gambling, pornography, drugs and decadent life styles. It will never match, or permit, individuals who accumulate tens of hundreds of millions of unearned wealth. For these 'freedoms' of a select few under capitalism, the USSR substitutes different freedoms for all: freedom to choose a career, freedom from fear of unemployment, freedom to obtain a higher education, freedom to obtain all necessary health care without cost, freedom to participate in collective management of economic, social and political affairs.

"The standards of the Rockefellers cannot be those of the builders of the BAM railroad. That is what you should remember when you read this book and regard the comparisons in that light."

Perlo stresses that the Soviet economy should be judged on its own merits, and his main concern is "to examine their economy according to *their* standards, their way of life — the standards and goals of a socialist society." He defines two long-run strategic goals: "First, to create the material basis for a socialist society, and then for a communist society; second, to prove the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system".

Withing that framework, Perlo identifies nine specific tasks and appraises the extent of their accomplishment. Among the historic goals the Soviet people set themselves are two which are of particular importance to those who are the direct victims of imperialist exploitation and its more odious manifestations-

the elimination of racial and national discrimination;

the building of economic reserves necessary to provide economic assistance and military support to weaker countries building socialism and threatened by internal class enemies and by imperialism, and to give similar assistance to developing countries seeking to win political and economic independence from imperialism and apartheid.

The historically new socialist economy, now at the stage of developed socialism, was built and is being further developed by the conscious, creative efforts of millions of workers, peasants and intellectuals, and Ellen and Victor Perlo introduce us to some of them, from all levels of Soviet society. They are good people to meet, inspiring in their rock-hard, well-founded confidence in their ability to shape their own future.

Perlo's great admiration for the Soviet system does not blind him to its shortcomings and problems, and his examination of how problems arise and the processes by which they are resolved is particularly interesting and instructive. He mentions specific shortcomings as he goes along, and deals with more general and strategic problems in a separate chapter.

Since the book was first published in 1980, developments have abundantly confirmed the accuracy of Perlo's analysis of the main trends in the Soviet economy — and highlighted the ever sharper contrast between the dynamic stability of that economy and the manifest instability and decline of the capitalist system.

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## **HOW THE REVOLT BEGAN IN ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP**

**To Every Birth Its Blood**, by Mongane Serote. (Heinemann African Writers Series. Price £2.95)

This fascinating novel brings out the polarisation of South African society in terms more graphic than the tables and statistics of most sociologists and



analysts and uncovers the roots of urban African revolt more effectively than many of the treatises on the 1976 events in Soweto. It is the story of the lives, loves and deaths of the people of Alexandra Township struggling not merely to exist but to enjoy existence and build the foundations of a better life for their children. It is a portrait of a fighting people whose unquenchable courage and lust for life defeats all the attempts of the apartheid regime to destroy them.

At the same time it is not a political tract, though inevitably, based in Alexandra Township, it is full of politics. For the novel is set in the period when the apartheid regime was beginning to plan the elimination of Alexandra Township, one of the few remaining areas in 'white' South Africa where Africans (or at any rate some of them) could still own land freehold. As police and officials invade the township, the people learn to fight back.

Serote was born in Sophiatown — the centre of the Western Areas removal plan which bulldozed it out of existence, to make way for the all-white Verwoerdian suburb of Triomf. But he went to school in Alexandra, and the lifeblood of Alexandra courses strongly through his veins. Like Sophiatown, Alexandra was a township of poverty and squalor whose population were nourished on hardship, one of the labour reserves of neighbouring Johannesburg, to serve which Alexandra's men and women were forced to get up before dawn, returning home exhausted after dark. But nobody who ever knew Alexandra, Sophiatown or District 6 in Cape Town could fail to respond to the magic 'something' which gave them a fascinating vitality and character of their own which all its denizens recall with a mixture of loathing and nostalgia. Serote writes

"Alexandra is one of the oldest townships in South Africa. It is closely related to Johannesburg. From the centre of the Golden City to the centre of the Dark City is a mere nine miles. Where one starts, the other ends, and where one ends, the other begins. The difference between the two is like day and night. Everything that says anything about the progress of man, the distance which man has made in terms of technology, efficiency and comfort: the Golden City says it well, the Dark City, by contrast, is dirty and deathly. The Golden City belongs to the white people of South Africa, and the Dark City to the black people. The Saturdays and Sundays of Alexandra roar, groan and rumble, like a troubled stomach. The same days in Johannesburg are as silent as the stomach of the dead person. The weekdays of Alexandra are those of the place which has been erased, in Johannesburg, week days are like a time when thousands of people arrive in a place at the end of their pilgrimage — nothing is still, the streets buzz".

Serote contrasts the apathy and resignation of the older generation with the defiance of the younger, who are not prepared to lie down any longer under the insults of apartheid. Inevitably, boys and girls, men and women

are arrested, tortured, done to death in police cells, but the struggle intensifies. The people learn to organise, to work underground, to handle weapons. The ANC and Umkhonto are not mentioned, but everybody belongs to or supports The Movement, and is acquainted with the life and death of Ahmed Timol and Bram Fischer.

Serote would not like a label, and indeed The Movement is bigger than any label.

"The Movement is old. It is as old as the grave of the first San or Khoikhoi who was killed by a bullet that came from a ship which had anchored in Cape Town to establish a stop station. The Movement is as young as the idea of throwing stones, of hurling one's life at the armed men who believe in God and shoot with guns. The Movement is the eyes which see how poverty is akin to a skeleton. So white. So dry ... Like an old tree, the Movement spreads and spreads its roots. It entrenches itself in the soil, issuing root after root after root, to spread and spread and spread. Some roots end up on rocks, baking in the sun. Some end up in sand. The roots spread and spread and spread. The tall tree, spreading its branches all around, gives shade to the weary".

Serote's novel spreads all over the township, rambling down streets and alleys by day and night, into shebeens and police stations, swarming with a host of characters the links between whom are sometimes tenuous and confusing, but who are always bursting with life. Apart from a brace of unconvincing 'liberals', whites intrude only as policemen or officials, but these are observed with pinpoint accuracy, and the dialogue between interrogators and 'agitators' brilliantly captures the smouldering antagonism and sometimes erupting hostility of the participants.

The title of the novel encapsulates the thought that a new world is being born out of the pain and suffering of revolution, and that no baby can be born without the spilling of blood from the mother. In this novel Serote has made a valuable contribution to change and social progress.

M.T.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE ON THE TRADE UNION FRONT

From comrades in Africa

Dear Editor,

Toussaint's article "A Trade Union is not a Political Party" in *The African Communist* No 93 of 1983 is one of the most important contributions to our journal for some time. It addresses itself to a crucial ideological question fundamental to the strategy of our Party and the working class as a whole. We noted that the Party took a long time to respond to Joe Foster's statement which constituted an ideological attack on us and the whole national liberation movement. We must blame ourselves for failing to give timely and scientifically grounded response to Foster.

If we are to make progress and win our ideological struggle, then we need to heed the important lessons in propaganda of being ever closer to the masses, to explain to them the nature of the Joe Fosters, their social roots and the dangers they pose to the working class and to the oppressed masses of South Africa. This is of importance if we also bear in mind that the ideas such as those of Joe Foster are gaining strength, as indicated by the positions of the National Forum and others. With the rise in the level of political activity and with many people seeking political education, there is greater need for the party's ideological guidance, otherwise the people will fall prey to the petty-bourgeois ultra-left influence being flipped around every corner. On this question and others of its nature the Party's response must be made in time, right inside the country and disseminated as widely as possible.

This question also brings into focus our organisational weakness which gives room for the spreading of opportunist ideas. Lenin pointed out that the increase in the revolutionary activities of the people brings in its train increases in opportunism, both left and right. This process can be observed

in South Africa too. It is not a chance occurrence, nor is it caused by external factors. Its causes should be sought in the socio-economic developments that have taken place recently in the country.

Among many factors that give rise to opportunism we may mention a few like the creation by state-monopoly capitalism of a labour aristocracy even among blacks. Since the beginning of the 1970's one feature of the trade union movement has been the growing number of members of the white intelligentsia taking an active part in trade union activities. It would, of course, be incorrect to make a blanket statement as regards their political positions since some of them can be identified with our own position. But we can clearly distinguish the tendency among some of them to adopt ultra-left positions. We should also note that this kind of politics is not confined to trade union work. Added to this there are the black intellectuals, students included, who for a long time have been denied access to Marxism and are now grappling with fragments of Marxist literature available, taking to Marxism through wrong channels. The setbacks of the 1960s are being felt and can also be counted as amongst the causes for the existence of this phenomenon.

### **Denial of History**

To this we should add the external influence. It is interesting and a matter of no less importance that FOSATU enjoys support from the same quarters that gave support to the Gang of Four some years ago. One factor common to Foster and the Gang of Four is their rejection of the dynamic and historical role of the Party and of SACTU. The Gang of Four sought, as does Foster, to create an alternative to our Party. In the reality of the South African situation, to reject the role of the SACP and SACTU, to undermine the role and great contribution of the ANC in our revolution, is to strip the struggle of its very essence and to leave it with nothing but revolutionary-sounding slogans.

Foster's language sounds very revolutionary but in essence it disarms the working class and, consequently, serves the interests of the reformists whom the ultra-lefts end up embracing. In essence both the ultra-leftists and the reformists have the same goal — the denial of Marxist-Leninist principles of the revolutionary process and the rejection of the correct forms of struggle. As Toussaint correctly observed, Foster is under the illusion that the workers' economic struggle can develop their political consciousness. For the development of the political consciousness Foster considers that what is needed is not a Party, which he carefully fails to mention; not a SACTU, which he criticises for involving itself in politics; and not an ANC which he tends to dismiss as a populist organisation, but a Solidarity type workers' movement.

These ideological trends pose a constant danger to the working class movement and to the whole struggle of the masses in South Africa.

Toussaint points out the danger of confusing the economic and political struggle, the trade union and the party of the working class. He stresses that the workers' struggle for economic demands will not of itself pass beyond this limit. Progress will only come about through the guidance of a party armed with a scientific theory. Lenin in *What is to be done* made a clear distinction between trade union politics and Social Democratic (Communist) politics and emphasised the role of the party in fighting all opportunist attempts to limit the struggle of the trade unions to a struggle for better wages, better working and living conditions and certain legal reforms. Trade union politics must be subordinated to Social Democratic (Communist) politics, to the struggle for the complete emancipation of the downtrodden millions. South Africa is no exception to this rule. Toussaint clearly defines the need for and the role of the advanced detachment of the working class — the SACP.

If there is any criticism to be made of this article it is that the author deals with Foster too gently. Although Foster carefully avoids openly attacking the Party, his standpoint is an attack on the whole national liberation movement and all forces that constitute the alliance. These ideological trends of Foster and the like-minded people are a poison to the working class and can lead, as Lenin pointed out, to the subordination of the workers' interests to those of the bourgeoisie. Such trends will continue as the struggle intensifies. For these reasons we should not be gentle with Foster but should regard him as our ideological enemy and adopt a more offensive attitude. Coming from a party leading the working masses, such an offensive should be viewed not only as an attack the opportunists but also as an educational process for our people. It should be understood that we are not attacking FOSATU or any other mass organisation but elements within these organisations who are misdirecting the course of the revolution.

### **Our Tasks**

Toussaint's article inevitably focuses attention on the tasks of the Party in relation to the dynamically growing trade union movement and the general political struggle in South Africa. In our opinion the following are some of the challenges the Party is faced with:-

1. There is an urgent need for increased work in trade unions, the most vital area for the Party to consolidate its position. We must intensify our political educational work in the trade unions so that they, inter alia, realise the dialectical link between trade union activity and political work.



2. On the ideological front, the Party must wage an offensive which must include first and foremost the spreading of Marxist Leninist ideas among workers. At the same time we must combat the proliferation of ultra-left and rightist ideas. This task demands the improvement of our ideological and propaganda machinery to ensure that when socialist ideas are discussed and debated (and they are being discussed and debated heatedly at this stage of our struggle), the Party's voice is clearly heard.

3. We must take the programme to the people to serve as a basis for training and education. This was emphasised by our late Chairman, Comrade Yusuf Dadoo, in his last letter to the Central Committee. In taking the programme to the masses we must explain and elaborate in a simple manner various concepts such as "colonialism of a special type" and the essence, role and place of each organisation in the alliance and their interactions. There is also a need for the Party to translate some of its documents in order that the Party may reach the ordinary worker. Naturally, all this demands a constant improvement of our tactics of being with the masses.

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## **IS THERE SEXUAL EQUALITY IN THE MOVEMENT?**

**From a comrade in Lesotho**

Dear Editor,

I am writing a reply to the letter in *The African Communist* No 97 from a comrade in Botswana dealing with the emancipation of women.

The foundation of the Federation of South African Women in 1954 and the adoption of the Women's Charter at its inaugural conference provided the theory and practice for the participation of women in our national democratic revolution. Women are an important integral part of the anti-colonial and anti-monopoly struggles in all revolutions and ours is no exception to this rule.

I will summarise three main points raised:-

a. that the participation of women has largely been neglected by the ANC and its allies.

The comrade then goes on to explain this neglect for two reasons — to avoid unnecessary divisions and to avoid bourgeois feminism. The

impression I have is of a spectator sitting on top of a mountain watching the struggle through binoculars. To understand the struggle one has to be a participant in the activities of an organisation and part of this activity is to read the propaganda material of the ANC and its allies.

Women like Henrietta Khuzwayo, Francis Baard, Gladys Smith, Helen Joseph, Ray Alexander and the scores of others involved in the foundation of the Federation of South African Women all participated in the formulation of the Women's Charter. This Charter was embodied in the Freedom Charter — a milestone in the fight for the rights of women which are guaranteed to them as equal partners in the future South Africa. "Every man and woman, irrespective of colour or creed, shall have the right to vote for and stand for election as a candidate in all elections". This right is a right which is not enjoyed by all — not by all women either — in South Africa today.

Yesterday the struggle produced seasoned revolutionaries of the calibre of Ruth First who was assassinated by a parcel bomb in her office in Maputo. The assassination was not an accidental recklessness engineered by a mentally deranged person. It was a calculated plot planned in Pretoria because of the revolutionary tasks undertaken by the comrade. The assassination did not come about because she happens to be the wife of Joe Slovo. No! It was because of the leadership task that she was performing. The fifteen years spent in jail by Dorothy Nyembe was the result of a mission given to her by the People's Army — Umkhonto we Sizwe — the task of creating a social base for our guerillas. In the ethics of guerilla warfare this task is amongst the most important, for the survival of the guerillas depends on the fulfilment of this task. Barbara Hogan is the first white woman sentenced for high treason for which she was given ten years. Thandi Modise, Lillian Keagile are a few other examples of women used by the movement as a whole. Mrs Nzima, a SACTU activist, died in a car bomb in Manzini in Swaziland recently.

Today the external mission of the movement has produced outstanding spokespersons of the calibre of Ruth Mompati, who headed the ANC office in the United Kingdom, a most challenging area exposed as a centre of South African spying activity by Gordon Winter in his book *Inside Boss*. She fulfilled her task well — a task in which many men would have failed. Lindiwe Mabuza is presently heading the ANC office in Sweden. The medical team of the movement is under the command of Dr Montwa Tshabalala — she is in charge of all ANC doctors, including those serving in the army. Dr Nomava, who died in her combat uniform in the jungles of Angola two years ago, will always be remembered. She was respected by both men and women in MK.

Florence Mophosho and Gertrude Shope, two women members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, are also well known. There are many others who, because of their work, cannot be mentioned.

I therefore cannot accept the assertion that "women are excluded from activities that require political and organisational skills". To accept this assertion is to accept that the ANC and the liberation movement as a whole are working contrary to its basic documents — in this case the Freedom Charter.

b. the threefold oppression theory raised in the letter.

I agree with the analysis to a large extent but I must caution that we find ourselves trapped by the black consciousness jargon of 'racial capitalism' and the assertion that the struggle at home is a racial rather than a national struggle.

c. talk about sexual equality.

Here again there is confusion. Sexual equality exists both in theory and practice as is shown by the examples which have been given. We cannot judge participation of the sexes in a mathematical way. The leadership of the movement is predominantly male, but not exclusively so. Does the comrade want people to be elected so as to balance the ratio between men and women? This would be artificial.

Whilst accepting the danger of imbalance, the way to rectify it is to swell the ranks of the movement by the mass mobilisation of women both at home and abroad. Furthermore the political and ideological consciousness of those who are already in the movement must be increased, both among the men and women. This was accepted at the Youth and Students' Conference held in Morogoro in August 1982. The importance of these tasks outlined is acknowledged by the fact that 1984 has been declared the Year of the Women of South Africa.

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## **A TRIBUTE TO SAMPSON NKWE**

**from J.R.S.**

His real name was Wolpe Sapnath Poho. Born in the village of Bethanie, Rustenburg district, on 20th December 1952 he was the second born of six sons of Mrs Othilia and the late Godfrey Poho. A long-life victim of asthma, Sam died after an attack on Saturday 3rd June at Mazimbu.

He completed his secondary school education in 1972 at the Herman Thebe High School, enrolled in Turfloop University and graduated with a B.A. degree in 1975. Thereupon he left the country to join ANC and MK. In 1977 he was stationed in Novo Catenge, Angola, and did much to establish the military academy then in process of being organised. As secretary of the Administrative Committee in charge of training and welfare, Sampson soon showed outstanding capacity, perseverance, continuity and attention to detail, combined with complete commitment to the revolutionary struggle that distinguished him for the rest of his life.

While at Novo he joined the Communist Party and like all good Marxist-Leninists found time during his crowded working days and nights for a systematic study of the classics of revolutionary theory. He gave valuable assistance in the organisation of political classes that were conducted at all levels for recruits and senior personnel.

Eventually he left with an advanced class for study abroad, but unfortunately was prevented by his asthmatic condition from completing the course. On being posted to Lusaka in 1979 he cheerfully assisted in the delivery of supplies to ANC members until his transfer to the International Department at HQ. Here he continued to display the qualities of a dedicated revolutionary until his departure for Somaesco in 1982 to join the Political Science Department.

Lulama, a colleague of Sam at Somaesco, had the following to say about his presence at the Mazimbu college:

"Sam was a man of the people. He was too close to the Charlotte's mothers as a brother and educating them. He was an adviser to the students, to the youth and staff. Comrade Sam has left an indelible mark on the youth".

During the three years of residence in Lusaka he suffered acute asthmatic attacks usually during the rainy season. There were times when it was necessary to rush him to hospital for urgent treatment consisting of drugs to ease the pressure on his breathing and an intravenous drip to restore his ebbing strength. When he recovered from these attacks he cheerfully resumed his duties.

We knew Sam to be a conscientious teacher, unsparing of himself, patient and ever ready to step into the breach. Sam was an old and trustworthy member of the South African Communist Party. He joined the Party soon after taking up his work in the West and remained throughout a strong pillar providing leadership and political education in the spirit of a true revolutionary.

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